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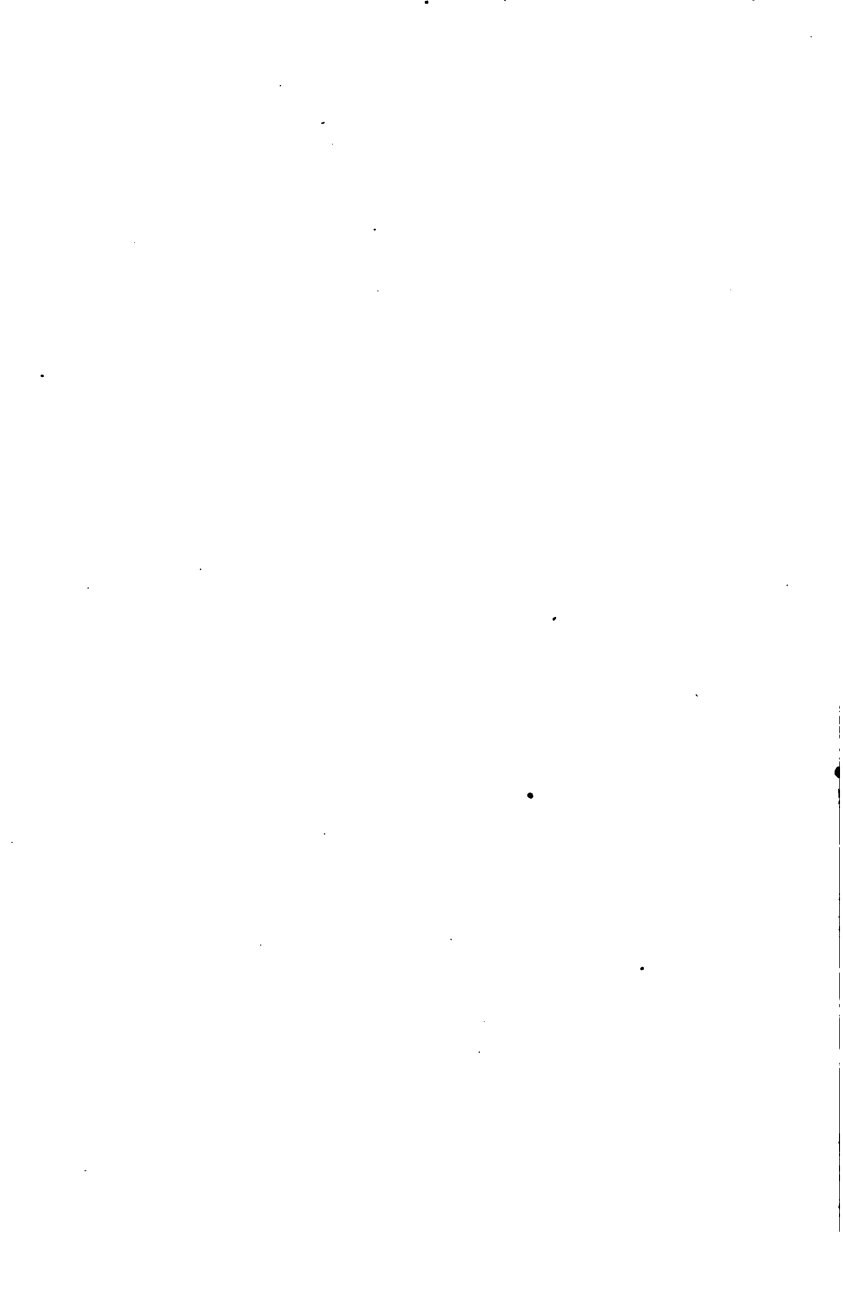
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Lea. May.

IN THE BY-WAYS OF LIFE:  
A SERIES OF SKETCHES  
OF  
FORFARSHIRE CHARACTERS.

BY  
J. S. NEISH,  
AUTHOR OF "REMINISCENCES OF BRECHIN AND ITS CHARACTERS,"  
"WANDERING WATTIE," "ROTTEN AT THE CORE,"  
AND OTHER TALES AND SKETCHES.

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Dundee:  
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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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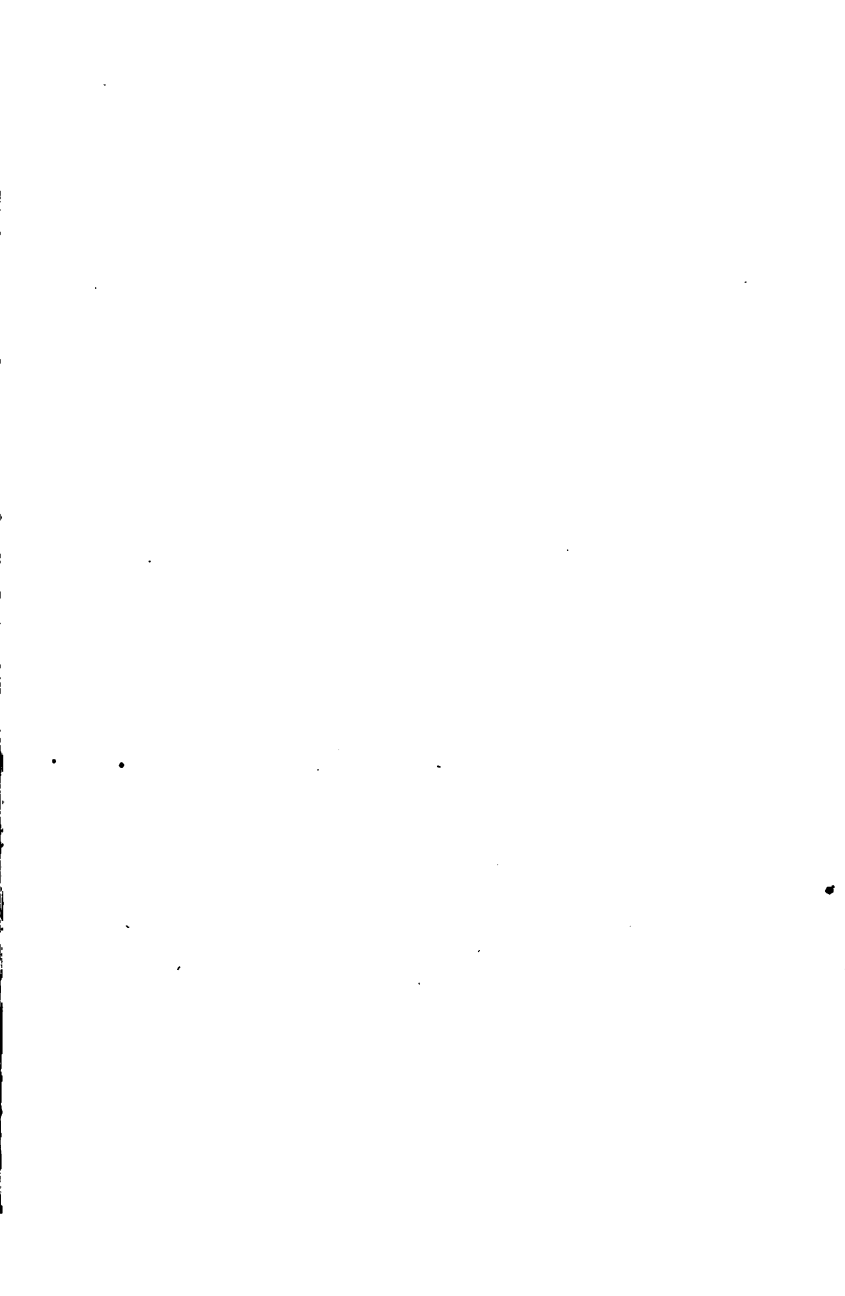
The success which attended the publication of the "Reminiscences of Brechin and its Characters" has induced the Author to offer another volume of Character Sketches to the public. The present Papers, like the former, were originally written for the *Weekly News*. They embrace a wider locality, however, and solicit the suffrages of a more extended constituency. The Characters sketched were real personages, and all well known in the localities where they lived. Some of them were personally known to the writer, and they all obtained a certain degree of local celebrity by their pawky sayings and eccentric habits. Numerous anecdotes regarding their peculiar traits of character still float about in oral tradition, and some of these, in various forms, have already found their way into print. In preparing the Sketches the Author has utilised all the information he could collect to enable him to present the reader with faithful and realistic portraits of the characters he has attempted to delineate.

Curiosities of human character are only to be met with in the "by-ways of life." In the ordinary walks of life men appear not what they are by nature, but what society and education have made them. The bustle and activity which characterise society now-a-days leave men little leisure and less inclination to seek amusement in observing the peculiarities of

eccentric individuals. Such characters are therefore becoming more rare than formerly ; not that they are no longer to be met with, but because less attention is now directed towards them. The subjects treated of in these pages belong to the past, and to a state of society that has almost ceased to exist. The customs and habits of the people have changed considerably during the last half century, and glimpses of life and manners of former days will be met with in the Sketches. If, therefore, the perusal of the volume may recall pleasant memories of bygone days to some, and afford them and other readers as well a little amusement, the Author will be satisfied that he has not laboured in vain.

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# IN THE BY-WAYS OF LIFE.

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## HUMOROUS TRAITS OF A DUNDEE BELLMAN.

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**B**ETWEEN thirty and forty years ago Joseph Dempster held the office of Bellman and Town Crier in Bonnie Dundee. Joseph was a universal favourite with all classes in the town. He was one of those good-humoured sort of persons who are never unhappy themselves, and who by their flow of spirits and lively wit serve to keep those around them on the "broad grin" at their drolleries and pawky sayings and doings. No matter under what circumstances Joseph's lot was cast, he never lost his temper, or got downcast in the midst of adversity, and he, poor man, had his own share of that during his checkered career. Few men had so many ups and downs as Joseph, but no position in which he was placed could break his spirit, or quench the fire of wit and humour which glowed within him.

He was born in Edinburgh, where he learned the trade of a shoemaker, and afterwards commenced business on his own account in his native city. For several years he had an excellent business, and occupied a respectable position in "Modern Athens." But misfortune came over him, and his business in Edinburgh was wound up for behoof of his creditors.

He then removed to Dundee, where, after struggling for a time as cutter and shopman, he once more ventured on the turbid sea of business. Fortune favoured him for a time, but Joseph had an amiable weakness in his mental constitution. He was too ready to oblige others, a trait of character which is too often taken advantage of by selfish individuals. Again he got involved in pecuniary difficulties, by kindly lending his name to a bill to accommodate a friend. The consequence was Joseph a second time became a bankrupt through the faults of others, and he was again reduced to the position of a journeyman.

His estate was sequestrated by his creditors, even his "household gods" were pounded and carried off by the ruthless "beagles." Yet amidst all his trouble and poverty Joseph's humorous nature only shone out the brighter. A fat pig which he had reared with great care was seized on and driven out of the sty, with noisy protestations on the part of grumph. Joseph had looked forward to many a savoury meal off his porker. The pig would have made kail and tasted the "tatties" to the bairns during the long dark days of winter, and in the face of such a dire calamity some men would have given way to despair or vented fierce imprecations on the ruthless raiders. But Joseph's farewell address to grumph was a model of Christian philosophy and pawky humour.

"Fare ye weel, Sandy, ye'll no hae lang noo tae min' on yer auld maister. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be His holy name."

Joseph was a staunch Seceder, but he was no sanctimonious pietist, and, moreover, he was shrewd enough to see through the cant of many would-be Christians. There are not a few of your would-be pious people who are ever ready to blame Providence for their misfortunes, when, perhaps, they have been the chief cause of the evil themselves. A person of

this stamp was bemoaning over some disaster in Joseph's presence, and piously averring that it was the will of Providence.

Joseph, knowing the real cause, could not refrain from launching a shaft at the popular delusion, and at the same time administering a sharp rebuke to his friend.

"That word Providence is a very handy ane," quietly remarked Joseph. "It's juist a sort o' pious Japan blackin' that gies a polish to things 'at widna bear to be owre close lookit intil."

A minister of the Established Church, one of Joseph's customers, was bantering him about his principles in his shop one day, but Joseph proved too many for him. "I've heard you preachin' on Balaam's ass," said Joseph, "but I'll wager, wi' a' yer Bible knowledge, ye cudna tell fat Abraham's coo said when he gied her a poke i' the ribs wi' his staff?"

"No, I could not, Joseph," replied the minister, laughing; "and I don't think you could either."

"Hoot, awa', is that a' ye ken," replied the wag; "it juist cried 'boo,' like ony ither coo."

Joseph's own minister, being one of those straight-laced persons, was shocked at what he considered Joseph's untruthfulness in the matter of his business. Shoemakers had an unenviable notoriety for telling "fibs" to their customers regarding the time that they would get their orders fulfilled. Shoemakers are not altogether blameless of this charge, nor do they seek to exonerate themselves from the general accusation, but they are often forced to make rash promises by importunate customers. Joseph had told one of those white lies to his worthy minister when he was serving as a shopman, and as Joseph was the precentor in the church the minister thought he deserved to be rebuked for the sin.

"Weel, sir," replied Joseph, when the minister

had finished his admonition, "I ken brawly we shoemakers are gien to raxin' a wee thought, but ye maun ken, sir, it's no me that mak's the lees; it's the maister. I only *retell* them owre the counter tae the customer. Na, na, I'm nae haun' at that job. I had a shopmate 'at was the best haun' I ever kent. I cud work wi' 'im, eat wi' 'im, or drink wi' 'im, sing wi' 'im, or pray wi' 'im, but for tellin' lees I cudna haud the can'le till 'im."

The worthy clergyman must have thought his precentor was a sad reprobate. One sacramental season at the sermon on Saturday Joseph did not make his appearance to lead the psalmody, and he was taken to task for this flagrant neglect of duty. "You see, sir," meekly replied Joseph, "I want a share o' the pleasures o' baith warlds. Saturday is a gey busy day wi' shoemakers, but if ye like I'll mak' up for't on Monday. If ye wad preach an extra sermon that day I'll be i' the dask at four i' the mornin' if ye like."

When he started business in Dundee he was sore pressed for money. His former failure in Edinburgh told against him in the leather markets, and harassed him in his business till he ultimately had to succumb to the pressure of his liabilities. At that time the trade corporations were in full power, and before any one could open shop in a royal burgh they had to pay a heavy charge to these legalised monopolies. The fee charged for the entrance of a member was no less than ten and in some cases as high as twenty pounds. Such a sum as this was a serious drawback to any one beginning business, for the money was just as good as lost, but it had to be paid, or at least an instalment of the amount, before any one was allowed to open shop. Joseph paid a first instalment to the corporation, but the payment of the balance hung like a millstone round his neck, and ultimately helped to drown him in the sea of difficulties.

When the second instalment became due, Joseph had nothing to pay. He was brought before a special meeting of the Trade called to consider his case. The day was Saturday, in the month of December. Joseph stated to his brethren of the craft that he could raise the money in Edinburgh, but he would require some time to perform the journey, there being no railways in those days. The Deacon suggested that he could walk through Fife on Sabbath, and thus accelerate his business by trespassing on the day of rest.

"Your honour surely cudna gar me transgress the Scriptur'," replied Joseph with mock humility. "Ye ken we're taught tae pray that oor flicht be not in winter, neither on the Sabbath day." There was a general laugh at the Deacon's expense, and Joseph was granted a little time to meet the demands of the Trade.

Struggling on, and pressed for money on all sides, Joseph only made a joke of his position. His spirits were too buoyant to be depressed by trifles. In company with a brother craft, he passed on the High Street one of his largest creditors, a proud, haughty man, who was fond of being honoured by those below him in the social scale. He was walking proudly, with a gaily-dressed lady hanging on his arm, and as Joseph passed he lifted off his hat and made a profound bow.

"You're very polite, Joseph," remarked his friend after the couple had passed.

"There's naething without a raison," replied Joseph, "an' there's a raison for that too. That hat 'ill maybe cost the gentleman twenty pounds some day."

Joseph was sharp enough in looking after himself at times, but at others he allowed himself to be overreached by designing knaves. He never could accumulate money, possibly like many more he did not fully realise the main principles of economy. His business career in Dundee was a continual hand-to-

hand struggle to make both ends meet. He once got an order from an officer to make a pair of boots, and when they were finished he took them to the Barracks, as he was led to believe he would get his money in hand. Cash payments were a matter of some consideration to poor Dempster. When he called with the boots at the officers' quarters, he overheard the young scapegrace ordering his servant "to tell the fellow to call back as he was not in."

Joseph popped his bald head in at the officer's door, and politely inquired, "Whan his honour thoct he wad be in." The officer, being in his own estimation an "officer and a gentleman," could not stain his honour with a falsehood, paid Joseph the price of the boots, slapped him on the shoulder, and called him a brick, and swore like a trooper that he would patronise him ever afterwards, an honour which Joseph had no desire to gain.

As matters drew to a crisis with poor Joseph, both money and material became scarce, and many a scheme he fell on to "raise the wind." He was at his wit's end one day how to get the uppers of a pair of shoes he had an order to make. He mustered out as much stuff as would make the bottoms, but soles were useless without upper-leathers. But our hero had a fertile brain. He could boast of a family Bible in his library, if there were few other works on its shelves. Said Bible was bound in "calf," and Joseph stripped off the leather covering, blacked it, and cut it up for uppers, made the shoes, and sold them to his customer.

Joseph was appointed to the office of bellman in 1836, and held that office till his death in 1840, only a period of four years. The eccentric character of the man found full vent in his new vocation, and whenever he made his appearance on the street to announce some proclamation, crowds of old and young

would gather round him to enjoy the fun which they were sure to get from pawky Joseph. On one occasion when he was crying the loss of money, he announced the matter thus—

“Lost, between the top o’ the Murraygate and the foot o’ the Wallgate, five five-pun’ notes; whoever will return the same will be handsomely rewarded. But I dinna believe a wurd o’t.; they were tint some ither gate,” he added in a confidential tone to those around him.

Another occasion a man in Fish Street had lost his wife and child. He thus intimated the matter to the public:—

“Lost, stolen, or strayed away from their home in Fish Street, a wife wi’ a blue short gown, an’ an auld mutch on ’er heed, an’ a bairn in ’er oxter. Ony body gien information that will lead tae the discovery of the bairn will be rewarded. Ye needna fash yersel’s about the wife, they’re nae carin’ a snuff for her.”

Sir John Munro, commanding a detachment of the 71st Highlanders, at that time lying in Dudhope Barracks, lost a favourite dog, and he employed Joseph the Bellman to cry the dog. Joseph did the job, but the great man was too great to think of paying for such a small service, and Joseph waited for his money till his patience was fairly exhausted. He put on his well-brushed black coat one day and set off to the Barracks, and inquired of the sentry if Sir John was at home. On being informed that he would find him in the officers’ quarters, he made for that part of the cantonments, and sent word to the baronet that one of the officials of Dundee wanted to see him.

The baronet quickly answered the summons, but on seeing such a plain looking personage as Joseph before him, he demanded rather haughtily, “Who are you, sir, and what is your business?”

Joseph, quite at his ease in presence of the brave baronet, replied, "You are the Honourable Sir John Munro, and I am the Honourable the Bellman of Dundee. I am come to present you with my little bill for crying the loss of your dog which your honour has forgotten to pay."

The baronet was highly amused with the comic bellman and gave Joseph a half-crown in payment for his services. Joseph retired making a polite bow, and saying, "I thank the Most Honourable Sir John Munro for his patronage and generosity."

Such was Joseph Dempster, the Bellman. Humorous, good-natured, and ready-witted, he was a social companion, pleasant and cheerful, whether in prosperity or adversity. Even if suffering bodily pain Joseph's good humour never forsook him, and if the opportunity presented itself he would crack a joke on his own misfortunes. He accidentally sprained his foot on the High Street one day, and the late Dr Crichton happening to pass at the time came to the Bellman's assistance. The Doctor knew the character of the man, and to have a little fun out of him he remarked gravely after examining the injured foot—

"It's a bad job, Joseph, the leg will have to be amputated."

"An' that be the case, I'll rin a' the lighter," replied Joseph with a merry twinkle in his roguish eyes.

Poor Joseph did not enjoy the post of Bellman very long, a situation which he filled with credit to himself and to the satisfaction of the public, and which suited his humour admirably. His life was cut short by an unfortunate accident. As he was coming down the stair in the land where he lived in Thorter Row, he missed his foot, and fell to the bottom on his head. He was taken up insensible, and carried to his home, where he lingered only a few hours till death put a period to his sufferings.

## AN ECCENTRIC CLERGYMAN.

THE fever heat of the Disruption had barely cooled down in Dundee when the Free Presbytery were called upon to deal with a refractory brother, whose erratic doings, to say the least of it, were to them, as well as subsequently to their brethren in the Establishment, a source of considerable annoyance. The affair at the time made a great sensation, both in England and Scotland, for the principal religious bodies in both countries were scandalised by the revelations which were brought to light in the course of the proceedings.

The case of the Rev. James Law, of the Mariners' Church, is still fresh in the memory of those who were capable of taking an interest in public affairs in the stirring times of the Disruption. Thirty years have brought a new generation on the scene, and as there are many now who know nothing of the particulars of the case, which is possessed of no little interest in itself, apart from the phase of character displayed by the principal actor, we have thought it desirable to present our readers with the present paper.

To begin at the beginning, Mr Law was appointed a preacher or missionary to the seamen in the port of Dundee under the Establishment prior to 1843. His labours amongst this portion of the community proved very successful, and in a very short time a large congregation gathered round him. The congregation met for worship in a small chapel in Reform Street, which has since been converted into a hall. When

the Disruption took place, Mr Law left the Mother Church, and his people along with him, and they were then formed into a charge by the Free Presbytery, and Mr Law ordained as their minister.

From what transpired subsequently it was evident that Mr Law was only a very lukewarm Free Churchman. Judging by his conduct we might charitably conclude that at that period of his life his mind was in a very shaky condition regarding Presbyterianism altogether, if indeed he had any settled opinions on Church government at all. But we must not anticipate.

His ordination took place in July, 1843, but only a few months elapsed ere he renounced his connection with the body, and sought admission into the Establishment. His defection began gradually to display itself in petty quibbles with the brethren of the Presbytery on trivial matters of detail in reference to the constitution of the Mariners' Church and the collection for the Sustentation Fund. At length he brought himself under the severe rebuke of the Court for a very unwarranted and extraordinary proceeding. It came to the ears of the "brethren" that Mr Law was in the habit of charging a fee of one shilling from every couple he married. He alleged that he exacted this money from the applicants for matrimonial bliss for the purpose of collecting funds for the Free Church. This was rather a novel way of raising the needful, but sorely pressed as the Free Church was for money at that time such a plan was never dreamt of by Chalmers or Candlish.

Mr Law must have considered it a pity that the Free Church should reap no benefit from the numerous marriages celebrated in Dundee. The minister had as good a right to be paid for his services on such occasions as the Session Clerk, and, considering the relative value of their labours, there was no reason

why the clergyman should do the "splicing" gratis. Viewed in this light the clergyman has the best right to be rewarded, for he it is who performs the important ceremony, the other functionary only registers and proclaims the intention of the happy pair.

The moderate scale of charges adopted by our worthy minister was a genuine proof of his modesty. Such a trifle as a shilling was not worth quibbling about, and doubtless those who had the good fortune to be made "one flesh" by his solemn declaration paid the fee with the utmost cheerfulness. None but mean and scurvy characters would refuse to pay his reverence for such a job. At such times those who are on the eve of consummating their happiness by the tying of the nuptial knot are open-handed to a fault, for generally in the get-up of the wedding festivities the principle of "the more expense the greater honour" seems to be the rule.

Small as the sum was which Mr Law charged it was a violation of the rules and customs of Presbyterianism. Neither the Free Church nor any other Dissenting Presbyterian body ever authorised any of their ministers to take fees for performing the marriage ceremony. The delinquency was withal so contemptible that the "brethren" contented themselves with expressing their disapprobation of his conduct. But Mr Law must have felt the well-merited reproof pretty keenly, for from that date he took the "pet," absented himself from their meetings, and generally ceased to hold fellowship with his brethren in the Presbytery.

Matters did not long rest here. In the spring of '44 he set off on a very mysterious journey to London without making any adequate provision for the supply of his pulpit, although he intended to be absent for a fortnight. At the weekly prayer meeting on Wednesday, which was the first public service after he de-

parted on his journey, a leading member and preacher of the Irvingites, or as they are now better known by the title of "Catholic Apostolics" came forward and conducted the services, having been invited by Mr Law to do so. This was "coming it rather strong" with a Free Church congregation so close on the heels of the Disruption. But if the members of the Mariners' Church with difficulty swallowed this "pill," they had a stronger and more nauseous dose to gulp down on the Sabbath. On that day the "angel" of the "Apostolic Church" occupied the pulpit in the absence of Mr Law at both diets of worship.

Such unwonted proceedings made a great sensation, and on Monday they formed the topic of conversation over the whole town. In those days, even more so than now, any little tit-bit in the ecclesiastical world was greedily swallowed by the hungry gossips, and we may be sure those who bore a grudge against the "Nons" rubbed their hands with ecstasy over the scandal. As may be supposed the story found its way into print. On Tuesday morning the *Warder* contained a full report of the affair, and, as luck would have it, the usual meeting of the Free Presbytery fell to be held on that same day. The *fama* was immediately taken up, and discussed. The reverend Court dealt very summarily with the matter, and unanimously agreed to suspend Mr Law from the office of the ministry.

The reverend offender pretended to be very indignant at the high-handed proceedings of the Court, for trying and punishing him in his absence. He appeared before the next meeting, read a long statement in defence of his conduct, and demanded the Court to rescind their suspension. Instead of giving in to his bluster, however, much to his chagrin the Presbytery confirmed the resolution of their former meeting, and continued their suspension until Mr Law could be

brought to a better frame of mind. There was nothing left for it then but to appeal to a higher Court, and protest and appeal he did to the forthcoming meeting of the Synod.

Ere a week had elapsed the Moderator received a communication from Mr Law expressing a desire to have his case adjusted by the Presbytery. A meeting was called at once, and after some formal preliminaries were disposed of, the penitent brother sat in presence of his brethren a quantity of "humble pie," sufficient to convince them that his stomach was still in a healthy tone towards the Free Church. This feat of moral gourmandism successfully accomplished, Mr Law was reinstalled to the full enjoyment of his sacred office.

This was only the first act of the comedy. The curtain fell at the point when Mr Law was once more reposed to his sacred office in the Free Church ; when it rose again it disclosed the erratic minister a humble suppliant at the doors of the Establishment with a hundred or two of his admirers hanging on by the skirts of his garments. Such was the fact. That miserable spectacle was enacted within a month after his humble protestation before the Free Church Presbytery. The appearance of a recusant pastor, backed by such a numerous body of his "sheep," was a cheering sight to the members of the Established Presbytery. But the Presbytery soon found reason to repent of their haste, and their protégé by this act brought a hornet's nest about his ears from a quarter no one ever dreamed of.

The reverend gentleman had in the course of his career played the part of an ecclesiastical weather-cock. This last display was the fifth somersault he had thrown. First he had been an Episcopalian, next an Original Seceder, then in the Established Church, afterwards in the Free Church, and now back to the

Establishment again in regular "Jim Crow" fashion. If by his last merry-go-round he had alighted on his feet and hoped to obtain rest and peace, he never was more mistaken. As soon as he was received into the pale of the Established Church there appeared a letter from Dean Horsley in the *Church Intelligencer*, addressed to Mr Law, which showed how unsettled were his principles, and how vacillating was his character.

Dean Horsley's letter was a plain statement of facts which Mr Law in vain attempted to deny. The Dean related how he had been recommended to his notice by a gentleman, who stated that he (Mr Law) was anxious to be admitted into the English Church. Several interviews took place between the Dean and Mr Law with this avowed purpose, and on these occasions he represented to the Dean that he had become convinced of the purity of doctrine and scriptural authority of the constitution of the Anglican Church. The Dean, believing the professions of his friend to be sincere, exerted himself to the utmost of his power to remove the various obstacles that stood in the way of Mr Law being ordained by the hands of a Bishop. To make the matter short, he recommended him to the Bishop of London with a view of being employed in the Colonies, and Mr Law went to London to obtain a private audience with his reverence. Thus the cause of his abrupt departure and mysterious visit to the Metropolis was fully explained, but in a manner which did not redound to the credit of the reverend gentleman.

In consequence of the revelations of his coquetry with the Episcopalians, and his duplicity in the whole of these transactions, the Established Presbytery of Dundee suspended Mr Law from the status of a minister. After a good deal of whining on the part of Mr Law, and a mastication and swallowing of some

of his former statements, the Presbytery again restored him, and he resumed his ministry to his adherents and admirers, believing that he was now in the position of their ordained pastor. But here again he had reckoned without his host. He was charged before the Presbytery with holding a conventicle in the parish of St Clement's, and the charge being sustained, he was ordered to desist from doing so in future.

His position was now simply this—That portion of the Mariners' congregation that remained loyal to the Free Church retained possession of the chapel in Reform Street, and Mr Law and his lady admirers—for it was alleged that the swarm which left with their erratic minister was chiefly composed of the fair sex—took refuge in the Caledonian Hall, Castle Street, where the Reverend James held forth to them on Sabbaths. But as the body had no sanction from the Presbytery to meet as a congregation, they were commanded to desist from assembling there, and their worthy pastor was declared by the Court to be only an unemployed minister. This decision of the "brethren" in the Establishment closed Mr Law's career in Dundee, and scattered to the four winds his sorrowing flock.

We might here mention in passing that the Mariners' congregation was the nucleus of Free St Paul's, now one of the principal congregations in connection with the Free Church in Dundee. Their history may thus be briefly told. After Mr Law left them they were not very fortunate in the choice of a minister and the congregation diminished considerably. At length Mr Wilson of Carmyllie accepted a call from them, and his able ministrations rapidly filled the little chapel, and they were necessitated to build a new church. Thus the handsome church of Free St Paul's was erected in the Nethergate, where

their able pastor, the well known Dr Wilson, laboured amongst them for many years.

Mr Law's subsequent career was quiet and peaceful. Glad to escape from Dundee, where he had cut a sorry figure, he accepted an appointment to a charge in Southmuir, Kirriemuir, from whence he was removed to Arbroath and settled in Inverbrothock *quoad sacra* Church, where he laboured with much acceptance till his death. He applied himself to the duties of his sacred office with warmth and zeal, and devoted much time and labour amongst the poor in the town and neighbourhood.

In Arbroath Mr Law was spoken of as a "dainty kind o' body," but he was also characterised as weak and feminine, and the sobriquet of "Granny" was applied to him by those who ridiculed his weakness. He was easily imposed upon by designing knaves, and many a trumped up tale of poverty and privation was poured into his too credulous ear. The most extravagant and outrageous tale of misery never failed to awaken his sympathy, and without any investigation or doubt on his part he would relieve the wants of the clamorous beggar till his deeds of charity and misplaced bounty became a by-word in the community.

A pious and charitable lady possessed of an abundant share of the good things of this life was a warm admirer of Mr Law. He was always a great favourite with the fair sex, although he lived and died a bachelor. This lady, who was well stricken in years, made her spiritual adviser the dispenser of her numerous bounties among the poor. As her almoner he had *carte blanche*, and he scattered her gifts with profusion and liberality, if not with discretion. He was a constant visitor at her residence in the country, where he gave an account of his stewardship, and talked over the many cases of destitution he was daily coming in contact with. From these visits he would

return to town laden with delicacies and comforts for the sick in the shape of wine, butter, and eggs. Mr Law was rather absent-minded, and if any new matter came before him the subject so engrossed his thoughts for the time that all other matters were forgotten. Coming home from his lady friend one day, with the tail pockets of his coat well filled with fresh-laid eggs, which he intended to distribute amongst a few deserving recipients, a new case of destitution was made known to him on the way, and he turned aside to see what could be done. He entered the abode of poverty, and seated himself on a rickety chair. But in doing so he forgot the perishable goods he was laden with—there was a crackling noise, and lo, the eggs were crushed, and the minister's black coat was smeared outside and inside with the clammy liquid.

Almost the only public movement he identified himself with in Arbroath was the formation of the Volunteers. When the military fever seized the "Red Lichties" the Reverend James Law came forward as one of the advocates and supporters of the movement, and set the example to his townsmen by enrolling himself as a private in the Artillery Corps. This was a very patriotic and self-sacrificing act of a minister of the Gospel of peace to enroll himself in the ranks of the Volunteer army at the call of duty. Considered in its true light it was a very ludicrous step on the part of a minister who had seen upwards of threescore years of his pilgrimage to stand up on the floor of the Corn Exchange amongst a company of active men, and be drilled to face and wheel right and left, form fours, and march in files and sections, and all the other intricate movements of a military machine. Some ludicrous stories went afloat about the drill sergeant, who was a bit of a wag, emitting now and then a vigorous explosive about the legs and arms of that stupid fellow Law.

The members of his Session were scandalised at their minister's proceedings, and represented the matter to him in its true light. Mr Law expressed surprise at their objection; but on their representation that it was rendering his position ridiculous in the eyes of the community he confessed that he never saw it in that light before, and at once agreed to give in his resignation to the corps.

Mr Law has gone the way of all the earth. His ashes rest under the shadow of the Abbey ruins. With all his eccentricities he was a good man, a fervent preacher, and in his day and generation he did a good work amongst the poor and needy.

## EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF A SHOWMAN.

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**J**AMES GOW, better known by the sobriquet of "Fizzle Gow," was for many years one of the most popular characters in his native town. Fully fifty years ago James was proprietor of a small show, or, as he loftily designated it, a "Theatre Royal," where, assisted by his amiable and gifted lady, he used to "split the ears of the groundlings" with his lofty rendering of tragic heroes on the boards of his wonderful theatre. His kindly manner and cheerful disposition rendered him very popular, and his eccentric sayings and actings were an abundant source of amusement to the juveniles of those times.

His father was a tailor, and James was at an early age seated on the board, and initiated into the mysteries of the craft. But young Gow was fully persuaded in his own mind that tailoring was not his "forte." He had conceived a strong passion for the stage, and his highest aspirations were to strut before the footlights in "sock and buskin." After serving his apprenticeship he set out on tramp, and obtained work in Edinburgh, where, to use a vulgarism, he met his fate in the person of his future wife. Like many a greater man James was smitten with a pair of bewitching eyes and a graceful figure; his heart burned with the ardour of first love, and he yielded himself a willing slave to the power of his charmer. After a brief courtship the pair were united for better or worse, and began life together in a small house in Gray's Close, Canongate.

Mrs Gow proved a worthy helpmeet for her ardent husband. Before and after marriage she was engaged in a subordinate capacity in one of the theatres. Perhaps this might have been one of the many attractions which captivated James's heart. He believed her to be one of the ablest actresses that ever trod the boards, and in dim perspective he possibly descried the road through her talents that would lead him on to fame and fortune. But "hard times" came. James and his wife were thrown out of employment, and ruin and misery stared them in the face. Pondering over his misfortunes one day, he started to his feet, and throwing himself into a tragic attitude, he exclaimed—"I'll woo her as the lion woos his bride. I am resolved, and no power in heaven or earth shall stay me from my purpose."

James had come to the resolution to open a theatre on his own account, and he began his humble career as a caterer for the amusement of the public in his own domestic establishment in Gray's Close. With the sticks and curtains of the bed he formed a little stage, and having extemporised a few properties, by the able assistance of his "better half," the theatre was fitted up, and intimation given to the public by a rude placard stuck up at the close mouth that the new Theatre Royal, Gray's Close, one stair up, was to be opened that night with the performance of a grand tragedy in five acts, and to conclude with a screaming farce, and the price of admission was only one halfpenny. Very indifferent success, however, attended the worthy couple in their first venture in the theatrical line. The citizens of Edinburgh were slow to appreciate "real talent," especially when it was to be had for an old song. At last, disgusted with the people, he struck his tent, packed up his "scenery and properties," and shaking the dust off his feet as a testimony against the proud-hearted

metropolitans, he turned his back on "Auld Reekie," and returned to his native town.

In Dundee a new field was opened up for the exercise of James's histrionic talents. He had not been long settled in his native place before he drew around him a knot of young aspirants to dramatic fame, and with the hearty co-operation of his matchless spouse, he was enabled to form a powerful company combining the rarest talent, and capable of producing first-class melodramas, and thrilling tragedies, at a price never before offered to the public. An old dressing loft in Small's Wynd was secured, and fitted up as a theatre. The old curtains that had done duty in Gray's Close were again put in requisition, to form the scenic drapery; the old tin swords and shields were furbished up and made to shine like burnished steel, and the flowing cloaks, made out of cheap calicos, were retrimmed, and no expense was spared in putting the pieces on the stage. The charge of admission was only one halfpenny, and night after night the efforts of the "poor players" were rewarded by the enthusiastic applause of crowded audiences of boys and girls.

One night, while in Small's Wynd, their efforts to obtain a house proved a complete failure. The night was bitterly cold, and the youngsters could not be drawn from their cosy firesides to shiver in the cold dressing loft, even though the "Castle Spectre" was to be produced with "new scenery and appointments." In vain did Mrs Gow tirl the drumsticks, and awaken the echoes of the wynd with her lively rub-a-dub-dub on the sounding calfskin of the versatile kettledrum. A very useful instrument was this same kettledrum. Under the skilful manipulations of the talented lady, it was alternately made to produce, as the exigencies of the piece required, the rolling, reverberating thunder, the pattering of rain drops, or the roar of Old

Father Ocean. In her hands also it gave forth a "concord of sweet sounds" to ravish the ears of the small boys, and draw them up the stair to the loft. But on this particular night the drumming produced no effect; not a soul ventured up the rickety stair. Losing patience at last Mrs Gow turned to her husband and said, "It won't do, Mr Gow." "Give them another tune, my dear," he replied in a conciliatory tone. Mrs Gow, as in duty bound, obeyed her lord's behest. She rattled on again for another ten minutes, but with no better success. Then suddenly she stalked into the house, and, regarding the company with fire-flashing eyes, she exclaimed—"The stars are twinkling, and the merry dancers light up the northern sky, but not a soul ascends the stair to-night." Then throwing herself into one of her favourite attitudes, she pitched the sticks to the other end of the loft, and shrieked at the pitch of her voice. "Avaunt, quit my sight; thy bones are marrowless," and, tossing the drum after them, she added, "Go to a nunnery, go! Mr Gow, hie thee to bed, I will return anon," and out of the place she strode with the dignity of a queen.

From Small's Wynd the "Theatre Royal" was removed to more commodious premises in Argyle Close, where the business was carried on with much greater success. The new Theatre was fitted up on a scale of greater magnificence than had yet been attempted by Mr Gow. The faithful bed curtains were discarded, and their places substituted by two painted scenes, with fancy side wings and other attractive decorations. One of the new scenes was used as the "drop," or the "hippen," as the "gods" derisively termed it, while the other, which represented a beautiful landscape, with wood and water piled in glorious confusion on the canvas, did duty for all scenic purposes. The imagination of the audience was left to transform the landscape into a drawingroom, a dungeon, a desolate

muir, or caves and cliffs by the sea shore, as occasion required.

But fortune did not always smile on their efforts ; every night did not bring a bumper house, which told rather hard on the "treasury." Various and ingenious expedients had to be adopted to "draw a house." At the close of the performance one evening the worthy manager appeared before the curtain, and astonished the audience by intimating something like the following—"Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to inform you that Mrs Gow, with her usual forethought and solicitude for the comfort of our patrons, will next evening have a large pot of potatoes boiled, and each person who visits this place of entertainment will be presented with a hot potato without any extra charge. To-morrow night, then, the performance will commence with 'Rob Roy,' after which the usual singing and dancing, the whole to conclude with a laughable farce entitled, 'Crossing the Line, or the Sailor's Wedding.' Each one will get a hot potato at the door, and, remember, the price, as usual, is only one halfpenny." Next evening the "Theatre" was crowded to excess ; the potatoes were in excellent trim, bursting their jackets, and as dry as meal. The audience was in ecstasies. The curtain rose, the play began, when a mischief-loving imp, elevated on the highest seat in the "synagogue," shied a potato at Mr Gow's head, as he was strutting across the stage reciting the opening soliloquy. The aim was deadly, and the starchy tuber left its mark on the tragedian's nose. A shout of derisive laughter rang through the "house," which was quickly followed by a perfect storm of "tattie peelin's," which drove the "characters" off the stage, and brought the performances to a close. This was the first and last time the "tattie" dodge was tried by Mrs Gow.

Mr Gow's style of acting was of the true orthodox "blood and thunder" stamp of the "penny gaff." He could rave and stamp, and "tear a passion to tatters," swing his arms, and "split the ears of the groundlings," but his greatest triumph was always achieved in the death scene. Fizzie's "dead fa'" brought down the house with thunders of applause, and always had to be repeated before the "gods" would be appeased. His "better half" was not much inferior in this part of the entertainment, though it did not so often fall to her lot to "die" upon the stage. On one occasion when she had astonished the audience by "departing this life" in their presence, she was so loudly applauded that Mr Gow appeared before the curtain, and informed the audience that "Mrs Gow was still alive, and would have the honour of dying over again to please the company."

It may have been on one of these triumphant occasions that the name of "Fizzie" was applied to her, but which was afterwards bestowed on her husband, and has since descended to his heirs and successors. Bombastes Furioso had been put on the boards "at great expense." Mr Gow was cast for the part of General Bombastes, and his lady took the part of the Prime Minister, Fusbus. In the course of the piece the General and the "Minister" fall out, quarrel, and fight, when Bombastes runs Fusbus through the body with his sword, and the luckless politician falls "dead as a herring." When Fusbus falls, Bombastes in a fit of remorse piteously exclaims, "O Fusbus, Fusbus, Fusbus!" which Mr Gow pronounced, "Fuzzie, Fuzzie," in such a lackadaisical tone, that, combined with the lugubrious expression of his face, set the house in a roar.

In putting the pieces on the stage, the "manager" was often sadly perplexed how to provide the various

accessories necessary to a proper representation of the action of the drama. Once, when "Rob Roy" was being performed, it was necessary to get something to represent a knoll or rocky crag, on which Helen Macgregor is represented as standing in the pass when she is discovered by the English soldiers. But James's fertile brain was equal to the emergency. He laid himself down on the stage on his hands and knees, making his prostrate body assume the irregular shape of rising ground. A piece of green cloth was then thrown over him to conceal his person from the audience. On the back of her "lord and master" Mrs Gow mounted, and in this position the curtain rose and revealed her to the audience, while at the same moment a solitary youth, arrayed in a cast-off red coat, appeared at the side wings to represent the advancing soldiers.

Flourishing the broad sword over her head, Mrs Gow roared at the pitch of her voice—"My foot is on my native heath, and my name it is Macgregor," stamping the "heath" with so firm a tread that James, writhing with the pain, groaned out in tones so piteous and loud as to reach the ears of the audience—"O-h, my b——."

But theatricals did not always prove remunerative enough to meet the necessities of the family, which in course of time came to bless their union. The "olive plants" sprung up thick and fast, and how to fill so many mouths became a matter for the serious consideration of poor Mr and Mrs Gow. The latter being rather of a practical turn of mind, began to speculate a little in fish to turn an honest penny. But James showed a strong aversion to the cadger business, as in his estimation it was degrading to the profession. In vain he remonstrated with Mrs Gow; she would have her way as most women generally do.

The "Theatre Royal" was not only the scene of James's nightly triumphs, but for obvious reasons it had to be used as his family residence as well. During the day the young Gows romped about among the "empty benches," while the domestic occupations of cooking and washing were carried on by Mrs Gow, and at night the tubs, pots, and paus, were stowed away behind the scenes, and the sucking tragedians put to bed. Occasionally the audience would be startled in the midst of a thrilling scene by the wild screams of a frightened child aroused from its sleep by the stage thunder, and lustily crying for its mammie.

Returning home one day while his establishment was located in Argyle Close, what was James's surprise and indignation to find a group of fishermen in the Theatre, and his wife "higgling and priggling" down the price of a lot of fish. "What! fishermen in my house, Mrs Gow?" he exclaimed in tones of thunder. Then seizing an old rusty sword from off the wall he drew it from the scabbard, and assuming a warlike attitude he turned to the intruders and cried fiercely—"One of your ancestors cut off the ear from a servant of the High Priest with a sword, but I'll have the head of one of you to-night." So saying he made a lunge at the fishermen, who, frightened out of their wits, fled helter-skelter to the street, and never stopped or looked behind them till they got safe on board their boat.

From Argyle Close, Overgate, the Theatre was removed to Whitehall Close, Nethergate, where he continued to perform for some years. But the company was ultimately broken up, and James's occupation was gone. For a considerable time Gow held the situation of costumier at the Theatre in Castle Street. While so employed Mr Phelps chanced to be engaged to play for a few nights. In one of the characters in

which the great "star" was to appear he required a pair of buckskin boots, but such articles were not included among the properties under Gow's custody. As a substitute James produced a pair of canvas boots well besmeared with ochre to represent the buckskin in the gas light. "What are these?" demanded Mr Phelps. "A pair of buckskin boots," replied James. "Get out, you fool. Do you think I will appear in such things as these? Take them away." "I have played Rashleigh Osbaldiston at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, in these boots," replied James. "You played Rashleigh at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh; nonsense," retorted the great actor, elevating his eyebrows and staring at the figure before him. "Yes; at the Theatre Royal, Gray's Close," replied James, walking out of the dressing-room with a stately tread.

In his later years James owned a wooden booth which he generally erected at the Meadowside, on the present site of the Albert Institute or the Post Office. Sometimes when he could gather a company around him he would give dramatic performances, but when that failed he had an exhibition of mechanical figures. On one occasion the late Mr T. Powrie and a professional friend paid the "pavilion" a visit to enjoy a little bit of fun. They tendered sixpence at the door for admission, but James refused the money, saying, "No charge made to professional brethren; walk in, gentlemen."

One day three Town Councillors, bent on a "lark," thought they would have a peep at the inside of Gow's show. Accordingly they presented themselves at the door, paid their money, and were politely shown into the boxes by James himself. Then returning to the front he pointed over his shoulder at the retreating figures of the city magnates, and shouted with stentorian lungs to the gaping crowd, "Observe,

ladies and gentlemen, this exhibition is under the patronage of the Magistrates and Town Council of this town."

James Gow was a bright exception to the average showman. Throughout his whole life he had to struggle against poverty in some of its direst forms, but in the midst of his sorest trials and hardships his spirit never forsook him, and his honour and integrity were never sullied by the slightest taint of suspicion. His private life was exemplary; strictly temperate in his habits, he was a kind-hearted husband and an indulgent father.

His personal appearance was quite familiar to the older inhabitants of Dundee. His thin lithe figure was generally enveloped in a loose flowing, graceful tartan cloak, cut after the Spanish fashion, and fastened about the neck with a large, bright clasp and a chain. This cloak, which was made by his own hands out of an old soldier's kilt, gave to his slender figure a rather picturesque and striking appearance.

James was often tormented by the rough and mischievous imps who frequented his show, but he seldom lost his temper, and would often reason with them on their folly with paternal kindness. But James's counsels and reproofs produced but a temporary effect, and "Fizzie" or his show was an excellent butt for the exercise of their propensity for practical jokes. In his absence they would break into the booth, carry off his figures, mix powder among his blue lights, and perform all sorts of mischievous pranks. Still James was never put about, even though the mysterious disappearance of the "cuddy" one night, caused the performance of "The Broken Bridge," to collapse prematurely.

About twenty years ago, James "retired from the stage," and settled down in Errol, where he spent the

evening of his life in comparative obscurity. Old age and its many infirmities crept on apace, and his circumstances became rather straightened. A few of his old friends in Dundee kindly came forward and got up a concert for his benefit, the proceeds of which, with the addition of a few subscriptions, amounted to about £50. This sum was placed in the hands of the Rev. Dr Graham of Errol, who disbursed the fund to James at the rate of five shillings a week. The last time James appeared in public was on the occasion of this concert, which was held in the Thistle Hall, about three years before his death, when he appeared in character, and recited a few passages from Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd."

Before his death, which occurred at Errol on Thursday, 5th June, 1879, he bequeathed his theatrical "properties" to Mr M'Farland, of the Dundee Theatre Royal, and made other arrangements concerning his family affairs. His spirit passed away calmly and peacefully. His remains were interred in the auld kirkyard of Errol, and the funeral was attended by the Rev. Dr Graham and the principal inhabitants of the village, and a number of friends from Dundee.

"He was a man, take him for all and all,

We shall not look upon his like again."

## WILLIE VALENTINE.

AN ARBROATH HALF-WIT.

THE line of demarcation between sanity and insanity is often very faintly defined in those unfortunates popularly styled naturals or simpletons. About many of them there is a strong spice of wit, shrewdness, or cunning, if you will, that people are sometimes deceived, and believe that roguishness or laziness constitutes a great proportion of the mental constitution of such weaklings. Bright flashes of wit often flow from their lips, and sage remarks, and advice in critical emergencies have often been given by acknowledged fools ; and such displays of mental powers have led people to be sceptical regarding their mental imbecility. These remarks apply pretty generally to the subject of this sketch, who at times showed such a strange mixture of wit and idiocy that he was popularly set down to be as much of a rogue as a fool.

Twenty years have not yet passed away since Willie Valentine used to wander about the quiet streets and lanes of Aberbrothwick. A thin, slender figure, a lank, lean face, with a grave, serio-comic expression on it that at first sight stamped him a fool, and as he was generally dressed up in cast-off clothing of superior texture, generally a world too wide for him, no one, even though a stranger, could fail to note that Willie was a public character. Willie, although located in Arbroath, was not a native. The town has neither the honour nor the shame of produc-

ing him, although it had a deal to do in rearing and supporting him. He was, we believe, born in the parish of Fettercairn, an illegitimate son of a poor woman, who had the misfortune to bring to the world another son a stage worse than Willie.

Willie was rather a peculiar character in his way. He had a great desire to play the gentleman, and abhorred the idea of soiling his dainty fingers with menial labour. The Kirk-Session having to provide for his temporal wants, boarded him with a douce old man, who followed the humble occupation of town's scavenger. John being old and stiff thought it would be a great relief to his arduous work if his half-witted lodger could wheel the barrow through the streets as he swept up the gutters. Accordingly Willie was put between the shafts to do the drudgery, but it went sore against his grain, and after a day or two's experience of wheeling a barrow Willie rebelled altogether. Willie was taken to task by his superiors for this flagrant violation of the laws of discipline—for his keeper was enjoined to find him some work to keep him out of mischief. In reply to the interrogatories put to him by those in authority, Willie replied, "John S—— killed me wi' sair wark. It was row here, Willie, and row there, Willie, till I cudna stan' on my feet. 'Am no fit for wirkin'; 'am as near the grave's the wark," he added with a mournful whine.

Willie could not be got to stick to any kind of work, and perhaps, to be charitable, the poor fellow was physically as well as mentally incapable of performing manual labour. He loved better to wander about the town and country making friendly calls on a wide circle of acquaintances. By this means he contrived to pick up the greater part of his living. As a matter of course, Willie's friends were generally working people, who never refused him a "piece" or

a plate of broth in return for a song. His musical talents were often put in requisition by the guidwives, and Willie took it into his wise pate that his vocal powers were possessed of a market value, and he resolved to offer them to a discerning public in full expectation of reaping a just reward. Accordingly one day he gathered a crowd of small boys round him, and after clearing his throat gravely announced that he was going to sing, but that "it was tae be for bawbees." A shout of approbation greeted this announcement, and Willie rattled off some doggrel lines in a rasping voice, which were his whole stock-in-trade. But it was all in vain. He might have roared himself hoarse, but never a copper came jingling on the flags to encourage him in his labours. Seeing that his vocal powers would not "draw," he changed his tactics, and adopted the whining mendicant style, but with no better success. "Ye see, sirs, 'am an auld man," Willie began in the true orthodox street drawl; "'am an auld man, an' as near the grave's the wark. 'Am no able tae wirk, an' I canna want, an' fat can I dae. 'Am fair dune ye see, I canna live lang, 'am mair than thirty. They killed me whan I wis young; they garred me row barrows fin I wisna fit for't, an' that's fat they hae dune. So juist gie me a bawbee or twa, an' I'll gang hame, I will." But neither Willie's music nor his doleful lament could wring a single copper from the hard-hearted public.

With all his simplicity there occasionally shone out some bright flashes of pawky wit, which no one would have expected from one of his mental calibre. There flourished in the town contemporaneous with Willie another fool named "Jock Mash." Jock and Willie fraternised together—a fellow feeling drawing the two to each other. Willie, however, patronised Jock in his own way, and laughed behind his back at him and called him "daft." It happened one day that the pair met,

when Jock offered to treat his chum to a dram. The two fools had an amiable weakness for the "barley bree," and would have swallowed any amount of liquor if they could get it. Willie accepted the invitation, and the pair entered a shop and were served with a glass a-piece, for which Jock paid the "lawin'." When the drink was served up, and the two were about to pledge each other's healths, Willie bade Jock run to the door to see two dogs fighting, and when he was away on this fool's errand Willie swallowed all the whisky and left Jock to slake his thirst with water, naively remarking to the shopkeeper "that it wisna canny tae gae whisky tae daft fouk."

One of Willie's female friends on whom he used to call once a week was in the habit of washing his face and treating him with a good slice of bread and butter. The weekly visit was always made on washing day, when Willie rocked the gudewife's cradle for an hour or two, for which she rewarded him by washing his face in the soap-suds and giving him a piece as if he were a child. One day the gudewife had been in a greater hurry than usual, and after the lavatory process she cut a slice off the loaf and handed it to her guest. The sly rogue looked at the bread with a blank stare, turning it over on all sides, and then broke out in a pious drawl, "Eh, ay, Mrs A——, it's real true fat the Scriptur' says, yer bread shall be given an' yer water shall be sure, but there's nae wurd o' butter or syrup there."

"O'd that's true, Willie, I clean forgot tae gae ye something on yer piece," exclaimed the honest housewife, taking the hint and remedying her omission by an extra dose of syrup.

Willie had, or pretended to have, a great veneration for ministers and kirks. He was regular in attendance on all religious services, and by the kindness of some of his numerous friends he was provided with a

suit of superfine "blacks" for Sunday. But besides attending on the ordinary means of grace in his own locality, he would make long journeys to distant towns and country parishes to be present at their communion services. It was wonderful the knowledge he possessed of the times and seasons when the sacraments fell to be dispensed in many parishes at great distances from Arbroath, but Willie knew the time correctly, and contrived to attend them regularly. When on these visits he always called on the minister of the parish, and if he did not get a "token" of admission to the table he seldom failed to receive a substantial token of the minister's bounty.

Like many people in the world with greater pretensions he loved the "loaves and fishes" that accompanied the Gospel, but he was too unsophisticated to conceal his predilections from the world. Willie stuck to the Auld Kirk, he would not be a "Non," for a very wise reason, and one which has turned the scales with wiser heads than his. Willie declared "the Moderates had the best kail pot," and so his love for the "flesh pots of Egypt" made him forget the bonds of the Auld Kirk and abjure the "Frees." Willie's favourite minister was the late Rev. John Muir of St Vigeans, on whose ministry he attended with the regularity of a clock. After sermon from the Rev. John, Willie called at the manse, when, by the worthy minister's directions, he was supplied with a hearty dinner. No wonder Willie was strongly attached to the minister and manse of St Vigeans, when both his spiritual and temporal wants were so liberally supplied. Willie of course was loud in the praise of Mr Muir. He said "he was the best minister i' the Presbytery, an' his kail pot boiled brown, an' was never kent tae reek."

Willie had worldly wisdom enough to "make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness," and while he

strove to keep the minister's favour, he did not fail to keep "sweet" with the maids in the kitchen. He knew that they had it in their power to render him quite comfortable, or the reverse, when he came to dinner on Sundays. Grateful for past favours and desirous of continuing in the good graces of the cook, Willie invested the sum of one halfpenny in the purchase of a valentine. He then got a schoolboy to write in his biggest hand on the back of the picture the following sentiments :—"This is a valentine from William Valentine, have a gude kail pot for me when I come out on Sunday." This remarkable love letter having been folded, sealed, and addressed, was despatched by special messenger to the cook at the manse of St Vigean, and of course in due time Willie received substantial tokens of the cook's regard. Willie, it will thus be seen, made his religion minister to him in carnal as well as spiritual things. In this respect he was not more guilty than many a hollow-hearted Pharisee, who even in modern times makes long prayers—if not actually at the corners of the streets, where they may be seen by every passer-by—are never absent from their pew in church, and turn up the whites of their eyes and shake their heads in the true orthodox fashion, while all the time they are secretly living in gross immorality, and rolling sin under their mouth as a sweet morsel. And why do men thus act the hypocrite, and drag themselves unwillingly to church, where the services are loathsome to their hearts, and are endured as a sort of unavoidable torture? Why, because it is respectable to go to church; because it will make them stand well in the eyes of their neighbours; will help to throw a cloak over their gross vices; and last, but not least, it will aid them in their business or advance them in their employment. Whoever they are who make their religion a stalking-horse for their worldly prosperity, or

a cloak for their sins, are acting from no higher motive than that which induced poor Willie Valentine to wait on the ministry of John Muir for the sake of the gude kail pot boiling brown on the manse fire. They may not like the comparison, and in some respects it fails to be analogous. Willie was a simpleton, deprived of his full mental faculties, and to a great extent irresponsible for his moral shortcomings ; but those who so act with all their moral and mental powers unimpaired are worthy of greater condemnation.

Willie was a burden on the parish of Arbroath, and when the Poor's Lodginghouse was opened by the Parochial Board, he was provided with quarters there. But it was in vain that the authorities tried to make Willie an industrious inmate. Work he would not, and in spite of the powers that be he wandered out day after day on his usual rounds. Willie hated the restrictions of the Lodginghouse. He had been accustomed to wander about late and early as suited his caprice, and what was bred in the bone was ill to take out of the flesh. Willie was reported as a refractory pauper. What he hated worst of all in the Lodginghouse was the clothes that were supplied. He was allowed to wear his Sunday suit when going to church, but his every-day toggery was made of good stout fustian, and were not at all gentlemanly like. But the climax came. The authorities heaped the last indignity on his head, and his proud spirit could brook it no longer. The Committee resolved to economise the shoemaker's bill by substituting wooden clogs for leather shoes, and the tender feet of old and infirm paupers were tortured by those ungainly and uncomfortable articles. Willie rose in arms against the clogs. He was determined he would not submit tamely to such treatment. Accordingly, one day he entered the Inspector's office and demanded his reason

for making him wear clogs. The official, of course, had nothing to do with the clogs, but he was the only person Willie could lay hands on to make his complaint to. The Inspector got indignant and ordered him off, but Willie would not budge.

"I'll tell ye fat it is, 'am an auld man, an' I canna' wear thae clogs, they hurt a' my feet, an' I want a pair o' richt shoon."

"You'll get no shoon, an' if ye dinna wear the clogs ye can want; away ye go oot here, and don't annoy me," was the surly answer of the haughty official.

"I canna bear to hear them clatterin' on the street," continued Willie. "Hoo wad ye like to wear them yersel'? Ye sud juist tak' a trial o' them; as weel you wear them as me."

But Willie got no redress. He and his fellow-paupers had to clatter through the streets and over the rough stones with their wooden clogs, to reduce the annual expenditure and save the pockets of the ratepayers.

Willie Valentine at last got tired of Arbroath and its lodginghouse, and gave both the slip one day, and took to wandering and begging throughout the country. From that time Willie became lost to the inhabitants of Arbroath. Some time after his departure a rumour was circulated that the poor man was found dead by the wayside on a bare moorland in Aberdeenshire, but whether such was the actual fate of Willie Valentine we have no means of ascertaining.

## A PAWKY BEADLE.

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**N**OT many years ago a Pawky Beadle flourished in Dundee named Malcolm, who was a good specimen of the shrewd, canny Scotchman. Beadles in former times enjoyed a notoriety for pawky wit, and Dean Ramsay, in his "Reminiscences of Scottish Life," gives some racy anecdotes of those functionaries. In country parishes they were regarded as privileged characters. Their acquaintance with all the affairs of the church, and their knowledge of the people in the district, afforded them abundant topics of conversation, and being generally men of strong common sense who were appointed to such situations, they made the most of their powers of conviviality, and were of course always welcome visitors at the firesides of the parishioners. In large towns the peculiarities of these functionaries were not so well known, and consequently it is chiefly beadles in rural parishes that the Dean finds his materials to sketch his characters from. A few particulars which we have lately become acquainted with concerning a modern beadle in one of the churches in Dundee will perhaps prove interesting to our readers generally.

Malcolm was a native of the parish of Brechin, and was reared to farm work in early life. He was afterwards bound an apprentice to a shoemaker in the town of Brechin. Getting tired of his bondage, Malcolm ran away from his master and came to Dundee. Whether it was that Malcolm was but an indifferent hand at his trade, and found when he started journey-

man that he could scarcely maintain himself, or if he, like many more romantic young men, felt an ardour glowing in his breast for a military life, I cannot say, but certain it was, Malcolm was not long in Dundee before he took

The gold, and was enrolled in a noble squadron. In short, Malcolm enlisted, and hired himself to His Majesty to wear a red coat, and be shot at for a shilling a day.

The brave youth had not been long in the service when his late master, who had been anxiously inquiring after him, learned where he had gone to, and lost no time in claiming him from the military authorities. There was a legal indenture hanging over the head of the young hero, and he had to strip the red coat and don the leathern apron, and fulfil the rest of his apprenticeship. You may be sure Malcolm went back to his old master with a bad grace, but there was no help for it.

At the expiry of his apprenticeship he had to surrender himself to the regiment in which he had enlisted, but the embryo soldier was eager for this consummation. No doubt but he had a grudge at his old master, and before parting he determined to play him a trick. On the day which terminated his engagement his master, wishing to make as much profit as he could out of the rascal, set him to make a pair of ploughman's stout boots, telling him he must finish them before he left. It was a hard day's work, but Malcolm "stuck in," and finished the job. On making the second boot of the pair the young scamp drove a long nail through the insole into the last, which was of course concealed when the soles were placed above it. The consequence of this piece of malicious mischief was that no one could ever extract the last from the boot, and therefore the work would be lost and the material spoiled. It was late at night when

Malcolm got finished, and pretending to be in a hurry to get away he flung the boots to the master, telling him to take them off the lasts himself. This of course the master had no objections to do, and he laid them aside till the next day. By that time his apprentice was off, and as may be supposed all his efforts could not force out the last, and the boot was flung aside in a passion. Years after the apprentice called on his old master, and confessed the trick he had played him, and the veritable boot was raked out from a heap of rubbish where it had lain for years, and its history almost forgotten. But this by the way.

Malcolm's career as a soldier was not without its hardships and adventures, but it is not with these we intend to deal. He saw active service and "smelt powder" in the Peninsula, and after fourteen years' service he was discharged by a grateful country on the munificent pension of sixpence a day.

He then settled in Dundee, where he married, and worked industriously at his trade. In course of time he obtained the situation of beadle in one of the churches, and the emoluments of the office and his small pension helped to eke out the then paltry earnings of a journeyman shoemaker. Malcolm was a great favourite with his minister, who was an eccentric bachelor, and withal regarded by not a few as "daft," or "no' a'thegither richt." The clergyman kept a horse, and Malcolm, who had a knowledge of horsemanship from his early training, was also employed as groom, which doubtless helped the earnings of the beadle a little.

Things went on tolerably well with Malcolm for years, but troubles and crosses are the lot of humanity. A serious charge was brought against the beadle by the Kirk-Session, and Malcolm was cited to appear before them to answer the accusation, which, if proved, would deprive him of his office and ruin his character.

The case was this. A court of discipline had been held by the Kirk-Session, the proceedings of which are always kept secret. There had been some peculiarities in this particular case, and to the indignation of the elders, the proceedings, or part of them, at least, got bruited abroad, and reached their ears, as might be supposed, none the worse of their travels. The blame was at once thrown on the beadle's head, and proceedings taken against him for his breach of confidence, or rather, for eaves-dropping at the keyhole, and then spreading the scandal.

This was a serious matter to the beadle ; the more so too that he was innocent as the sequel proved. The minister having a leaning to his servant, tried to appease the wrath of the elders and quash proceedings against him, but his good offices were unavailing. The matter became publicly known, and some pitied and others blamed the church functionary. But when the consequences to the beadle became known, the real culprits were constrained to come forward and exonerate the poor man. Malcolm received a confession from a certain quarter as to how the scandal got abroad, and he pawkily resolved to confound the Session and clear himself in a quiet way.

Accordingly he waited on the minister, and on being shown into his presence, Malcolm said—"Wad ye juist read the minute o' that meetin' that ye're blamin' me for tellin' stories about?"

"What good would that do you, Malcolm?"

"Never ye mind, juist read the minute, an' I'll tell ye," replied Malcolm.

"I would do anything to oblige you, Malcolm, and get you clear of this business, but the minute book is in the vestry," replied the minister.

"If ye gie me the key o' the table drawer, I'll soon bring ye the minute book," replied Malcolm.

The minister gave the beadle the key, and off Malcolm set, and soon returned with the book. The minister opened it, and turning to the page, began to read—"A meeting of Kirk-Session was held in the minister's diningroom."

"That's plenty; ye needna read ony mair," said Malcolm. "The meeting was held in your ain dinin'-room, an' no i' the vestry, so of course I wisna there, an' cudna carry ony clashes fan I cudna hear them. Ye'll hae tae look nearer hame for the loon."

The beadle's innocence was thus clearly established, and the proceedings against him quashed. The facts of the case were simply these. The minister was at the time suffering from a slight indisposition, and the Session was held as the minute set forth in the dining-room at the Manse, a circumstance which had been overlooked by both minister and elders. While the meeting was going on the maids in the kitchen were enjoying themselves along with some male cousins or "followers," as the Cockneys term them. It was thought capital fun by the lads to listen at the key-hole, where they heard the whole proceedings, and afterwards thoughtlessly joked about them to their companions. But it would have ruined the poor beadle if one of the culprits had not confessed. He offered to clear Malcolm before the Session, but the pawky beadle rendered that alternative unnecessary.

Some of the elders were chagrined at this turn of affairs, and as elders are, at least some of them, "of the earth, earthly," they conceived a strong dislike to Malcolm, and determined to have him dismissed. A charge of drunkenness was next brought against him, and persisted in, so that all the minister's influence was not sufficient to stem the torrent of righteous indignation which was poured on the head of the poor beadle.

The minister accosted Malcolm one day while these rumours were afloat, with the view no doubt of ascertaining what Malcolm had to say for himself. Malcolm was at the time busy currying the horse, and the minister remarked—

“This is a serious charge against you this time, Malcolm. Drunkenness is a grave offence.”

“An’ d’ye believe that, sir?” inquired Malcolm, without desisting from his work.

“Everybody says it, and I am forced to believe it,” replied the minister.

“A’ body says ye’re daft, but I dinna believe’t,” retorted Malcolm, slapping the minister’s shoulder, and then continuing his work as before. “But I’ll tell ye fat it is, sir,” continued Malcolm, still rubbing away vigorously at the animal, “if ye blame me for drink ye may blame a’ the Session an’ yersel’ tae the boot. Afore ye turn me oot for takin’ a dram ye’ll hae tae whitewash the hale Session. I dinna deny but fat I whiles tak’ a drap speerits, but ye never saw me ony the waur o’ drink, an’ that’s mair than can be said o’ some fowk I cud name. If I tak’ a dram it’s by ways o’ medicin’. I’m an auld man, noo, an’ growin’ short o’ breath, an’ a glass helps tae gar my bellows gang a wee thocht better for a whilie. An’ then on cauld winter nichts, when I’m waitin’ on a meetin’ at the Kirk, I hae tae hing about i’ the draught o’ the passage for twa lang ’oors sometimes, an’ a glass helps tae keep my blood frae freezin’. An’ a’ that time you an’ the elders hae been sittin’ in a carpeted room wi’ a guid fire on, an’ fin ye come past me an’ fin’s the smell of my breath, they rin awa’ hame an’ cries ‘O! Macom drinks, Macom’s drunk.’”

The force of Malcolm’s apology and denunciation had such an effect on the minister that he prevailed on the “unco guid and rigidly righteous” members of

his Session to let Malcolm alone, and if the minister put it in as strong a light before the Session as the beadle had done they must have felt ashamed of themselves.

As Malcolm advanced in years he felt that an increase of his pension would be a great boon. According to the terms of his discharge he was entitled to a rise of pension after a lapse of years, and accordingly he applied to the military authorities to allow him an advance.

Red tape and routine are not easily moved in military matters, and such an humble affair as an old soldier begging for an increase of a sixpence a day was too insignificant to disturb the equanimity of the heads of the British army. Time rolled on, and no attention was paid to Malcolm's application, although it was supported by a certificate from his minister.

Months, years passed away, and Malcolm's numerous petitions were disregarded or answered evasively till the old man's patience was worn out, and his hopes of a favourable answer almost dispelled. When "sick at heart with hope deferred" a bright idea struck him, which he at once resolved to carry out. At that time Lord Panmure was Minister of War, and Malcolm hearing that his Lordship was staying at Brechin Castle, he paid a visit to that place, and asked an interview with his Lordship. The lackeys probably taking him for some old Highland tenant farmer shewed Malcolm into a braw room where, after waiting there a short time, his Lordship made his appearance.

Malcolm did not feel a bit uncomfortable in the presence of a real "live lord." In his homely way he said he had "come to see if he wad dae him a sma' favour. My name's Malcolm; d'ye no mind o' me bein' i' the same class wi' ye at Dominie Lanton's schule?"

"I do not recollect of you," replied his Lordship graciously; "but since you remember me I suppose I must have known you then. What can I do for you?"

Malcolm told all about his application for an advance of pension, and how fruitless had been all his petitions. "If ye wad only be guid enough to speak a wurd for me till Her Majesty I'm sure it wad help me."

His Lordship inquired the length of Malcolm's service, the regiment he served in, the actions he was engaged in, and the names of his officers, besides his address in Dundee. He then told him that he would do what he could for him, and Malcolm returned home with a blythe heart.

In a very short time after his visit to Brechin Castle, Malcolm received an official intimation that his pension would be advanced to a shilling a day, dating from last pay day. Pension day came round at last, and Malcolm presented himself at the Paymaster's office, but to his chagrin the Paymaster refused to pay him the advance. Malcolm showed his official letter, but to no purpose, the Paymaster had got no instructions from headquarters. In consequence of this hitch, Malcolm refused to take the sixpence which was offered, and left the office in high dudgeon, muttering to himself that he would have to go to Brechin again.

As he was coming down Reform Street, Lord Panmure's carriage was being driven up the street. Malcolm was wondering whether his Lordship was in the vehicle or not, when he heard his name called by his Lordship himself. This was fortunate. His Lordship asked if he had got his pension all right, and Malcolm explained what had occurred at the pay office.

"Go home, and I'll see about it immediately," said his Lordship.

In an hour or two Malcolm was sent for by the Paymaster, and received the full amount of one shilling a day, which he enjoyed for the remainder of his life. Verily the patronage of a great man has an electrical effect on tardy officials.

## PLUFFY SCOTT.

AN ARBROATH MISER.

UPWARDS of sixty years ago there flourished in Arbroath an odd specimen of the *genus homo*, popularly designated by the cognomen of Pluffy Scott. Of course Pluffy was a sobriquet, which was substituted for the Christian name of William, in consequence of some peculiarities of character to be hereafter explained. For many years he followed the occupation of a coal merchant, but though he was well known to be possessed of a considerable amount of capital, his stock of "black diamonds" was never more extensive than he was capable of transporting on a one wheeled barrow. In short Scott was too cautious in his mercantile transactions to lay down capital in stock in trade. He just acted as a commission agent on a small scale. He first procured an order, and got the money with a small fee as commission, and then he proceeded to the shore, got the coals, paid for, and delivered them to his customers.

His personal appearance was grotesque, his habits dirty and miserly. His face, begrimed with coal dust, never enjoyed the luxury of soap and water, while the fantastic rags he wore bespoke abject poverty and wretchedness. Any old cast-off rag was eagerly taken possession of by Pluffy, and worn till it literally fell off from sheer decay. Now, he would appear in the uniform of a soldier; now in the garb of a son of Neptune; now he sported an orthodox swallow tail of black or bottle green; and anon a fustian jacket; in short, whatever kind of cast-off "duds" he could pick

up, or receive in charity, were all one to Pluffy. The gay scarlet of the soldier's uniform, shorn of its pristine glory ere its honour was tarnished on Pluffy's back, soon assumed a striking combination of *rouge et noir*, or red and black, from the constant contact with dirty coal bags, and rendered his appearance as odd and ridiculous as a harlequin. But Pluffy was thrifty with his old clothes. He believed in the prudent maxim of "Clout the auld, the new are dear," and acted on it too most rigidly. His rough labour would have subjected the strongest fabrics to a great deal of tear and wear, but half worn garments could not long hold out against such rough treatment. Pluffy was therefore oftener clothed with rags than "hale claiith," and his industry and ingenuity were in constant exercise to keep his "duds" from flying off his back. The holes he darned with worsted threads, white, black, or brown, or any shade or hue he could lay hands on, without regard to the ground colour of the garment. Patches of any hue and shape, patch above patch, red upon black, black upon green, blue upon grey, were stuck here and there till his garments assumed as many colours as the famous coat worn by Jacob's favourite son. When buttons fell off pins supplied their place, and held the rags together, which were often scant enough to shield his shivering frame from the weather or conceal his nakedness from modesty's gaze.

Such was Pluffy's public appearance. His home life was even more wretched and forlorn. He inhabited a miserable hovel, more like a pigstye than a human habitation. Furniture there was none, with the exception of a huge chest which served the several purposes of table, chair, and bed. On the top of this "ark" the miserable wretch coiled himself up at night without doffing the rags that covered him during the day, and there he slept, surrounded by a flock of

barnyard fowls, his pets and companions. Pluffy was a great poultry fancier in his own way, and his den was literally nothing else than a confined hen coop. Every kind of barnyard fowls were reared and fed by this eccentric character. Ducks and geese waddled through the floor and quacked with delight as they disported themselves in the muddy waters of a mimic loch which had been formed either by nature or art in the centre of the hovel, while bantam, game, and midden chanticleer crowed their "salutations to the morn," and fought and 'greed the live long day to the intense joy and pleasure of their owner. On the weekly market days Scott was early astir, and with the keen eye of a connoisseur he inspected the fowls which the sonny farmers' dames were offering for sale. He liked the "pluffy" or fat ones best, and as he became notorious for hunting about on market days among the country folks for pluffy hens, the nickname was in course of time applied, and stuck to him ever after. He often bought hens and other poultry at the weekly market, but poor Pluffy never for a moment thought of "thrawing their necks" to regale himself with such toothsome delicacies. No, he reared and fed his poultry out of pure fancy, and not from any desire to profit by their sale, or to gourmandise on their eggs and flesh. It is said that in his enthusiasm he once attempted to hatch duck's eggs by lying over them, but the process of incubation taxed his patience so much that he was fain to abandon the experiment.

It is hardly possible to conceive what strange aberration of mind impelled a human being to adopt such a singular mode of life. That his intellect was clouded to a certain extent there is no reason to doubt, but his faculties were in many ways keen and active. He was possessed of a very retentive memory, and was always well posted up in the local news and

gossip of the town and neighbourhood, though he was never known to lose time either in collecting or imparting news. Plying his avocation throughout the town he picked up scraps and items which he was ever ready to relate to any one who desired information, but in rehearsing his budget he never set down his barrow, as a confirmed gossip would have done, but told his story as he trudged along. He was a most industrious, persevering character, knew the value of time and money well, and he succeeded in economising the former and hoarding the latter.

There is an old Scotch proverb of wide general application which says :—"There's aye some water whaur the stirkie droons," or in plain English, there is a reason or a cause for every unexplainable circumstance, and like most other oddities there was a popularly understood reason why Willie Scott adopted such an unsocial and self-denying life. Disappointed love has often turned the brain and wrecked the life of many a promising individual, but in Scott's case it was not love but pride which made him a social outcast.

In early life Willie Scott was the beau of the town, a perfect dandy among his contemporaries. The love of dress and pride of heart were then his ruling passions.

"The foplin sae fine and sae aery,  
Sae fondly in love wi' himsel,  
Sae proud o' his ilka new deary,  
To shine at the fair an' the ball."

He dressed with all the care of a finished coxcomb, and strutted forth to exhibit himself to the admiration of the fair sex and the envy of his male compeers at market, kirk, wedding, and funeral. But a "change came over the spirit of his dream," or to speak more correctly, he was rudely awakened from one vain dream only to be entranced in another, and if possible

a worse. Just when in the height of his glory his feelings were shocked at seeing a mutilated corpse lying on the beach, which the hungry waves had swallowed and then ejected on the shore. The sight of the ghastly corpse made him reflect on the vanity of adorning and pampering his own dainty person, which was doomed to corruption and to become loathsome in its decay. From that time he doffed his finery, withdrew from society, clothed himself in rags, and "mortified his body and put it to open shame."

It is unnecessary to moralise on such a pitiable story. The tale bears its moral on the surface so plain and palpable that "he who runneth may read." The lesson was wholesome; the spectacle of inanimate human clay, hastening to corruption, is calculated to teach lessons of humility and show the folly of pride; but in the case of poor Scott it produced the worst possible effects.

In course of time Pluffy began to accumulate money, but unlike the typical miser, he did not hoard his gold in a strong box and gloat over it in the darkness and silence of his den. On the contrary, he acted as any sensible man would have done with his savings. He lodged them in bank till a goodly sum was at his credit, and then he purchased property till he became a house proprietor to a large extent in his native burgh. His first essay as a purchaser of house property was very characteristic. A house was being offered for sale by roup, and among the little knot of well-to-do gentlemen who usually frequented such sales was to be seen Pluffy Scott in all the pride of his rags and dirt.

The terms and conditions of sale having been formally read over, and the upset price named, the auctioneer looked round the group for bidders. But neither a "nod or a wink" was returned to his appeal. Again, till three times three, he called out for buyers,

but still no response. The auctioneer looked vexed, the loungers stole glances at each other, each, no doubt, wondering who would have the courage or the capital to invest.

The sale was about to be adjourned, when, to the astonishment of all present, Pluffy stepped forward and offered the upset price. The auctioneer frowned, but he had got a bode, and as a matter of form he must go on. The bystanders thought it a capital joke, and chuckled heartily at the idea of Pluffy bidding £200 for a house. At last, there being no advance on the upset price, the hammer fell, and Pluffy was declared the purchaser.

"Going—gone, sold to William Scott," cried the auctioneer, with ill-concealed chagrin, while the loungers roared with laughter.

"Lat them lauch 'at wins, the hoose is mine," cried Pluffy exultingly.

"Where's your security?" demanded the auctioneer sharply.

"I dinna ken what ye mean by security, but here's yer siller, and gi'e me the hoose," replied Pluffy, tossing down a roll of bank notes.

The auctioneer opened his eyes to their fullest extent, and the merry idlers looked sheepishly at each other.

"If you are to pay the money just now, Mr Scott, you are entitled to discount," quietly remarked the clerk of sale, when he had carefully counted the roll of notes.

"I want nae discount, and nane o' yer humbug," returned Pluffy, who had a fancy that the auctioneer and legal gentleman meant to play on him. "I've bought the hoose, an' that's the siller for't. A bargain's a bargain; an' I ha'e plenty o' witnesses."

No further objection was offered either by the auctioneer or the clerk of the sale. They could not

refuse to accept Pluffy as a purchaser, since he offered to pay the "ready," and though he would have nothing to do with their discount he was declared the owner of the property. A pawky dominie who taught the "young idea how to shoot," in a rural seminary not far from Aberbrothock, used to relate this anecdote of Pluffy to his rustic pupils by way of an arithmetical exercise. After relating the stock joke, the worthy Mr Taws would tell the youngsters to take their slates and work out how much discount Pluffy was entitled to at  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , 2,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , 3,  $3\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , and so on per cent. *ad infinitum*. Any of our readers curious on the point can just try the same plan. Given the sum of say £200, by a little simple figuring they can easily find out the sum lost by Pluffy at any imaginary per centage.

Pluffy Scott in course of time became proprietor of considerable house property, from which he drew a goodly sum for rent. Yet the acquisition of wealth in no way effected a change in his miserly habits and beggarly dress. He continued to wear his patched-up habiliments, and trundle his barrow loads of coals, and lived in the same squalid hovel amongst his feathered companions. To feed and maintain his poultry was one of the main pursuits or rather the sole pleasure of poor Pluffy's life. His poultry were well fed, but he never spent a single penny in the purchase of food for them, although he spared neither time nor labour to provide for their wants. He wandered about the town and country gathering up pickles of scattered grain here and there, old potatoes, and such like refuse from gutters and "midden-heads," and these he would mash or mix together on the lid of his famous "kist," and feed his fowls with.

Another trait of Scott's character must not pass unnoticed. From what we have said it will be readily supposed that Pluffy was very fond of money. The

fact that he deprived himself of the comforts, decencies, and necessities of life, and all the while hoarding up money, is sufficient to warrant such a supposition. Yet strange to say, after he was owner of houses not a few, if he took it into his head he would turn out a tenant without any apparent reason, and allow the house to stand tenantless for years. Such whims often seized hold of Pluffy's mind, and while the whim lasted no temptation in the shape of high rent would move him to let the doomed tenements. "Na, na, better a toom hoose than an ill tenant," was Pluffy's invariable reply to all such appeals.

Sixty years have wrought many changes, both commercially and socially. In the present day a man, however industrious, could barely earn "salt" by re-tailing coals on a wheelbarrow. Such eccentric characters as Pluffy Scott are now becoming very rare. In fact his dirty habits and disgusting herding with the lower animals would not be tolerated now-a-days. Pluffy, and all such as he, would have been capital game for Sanitary Inspectors to hunt down; and from the known vigilance of many of these public officials Pluffy would have been compelled to

"Thraw the necks o' his hens an' cockies,  
An' clear his dirty den o' chuckies."

RECOLLECTIONS OF AUCHMITHIE  
AND LUCKY WALKER'S.

THE fishing village of Auchmithie, situated on the east coast of Forfarshire, at a distance of three miles from the busy town of Arbroath, has now become classic ground. It is generally supposed that this quaint little hamlet is the Musselcraig of Scott's "Antiquary," and the adjacent thriving town of Arbroath the Fairport of the same admirable fiction. Possibly this is only a mere matter of conjecture after all, although the scenery described in the romance bears a striking resemblance to the rugged coast scenery eastward from Arbroath, though the comparison does not hold good in every particular. Be that as it may, the discrepancies between the scenery in the fiction and the rugged coast line to the east of Arbroath may have been purposely introduced by the author to suit the incidents in the plot, and possibly to disguise the *locale* of his famous character, Monk-barns. At all events, the locality around the town, and along the coast as far as Auchmithie, and even beyond it eastward, is now acknowledged to be the scene where the plot of the "Antiquary" was laid. Auchmithie, as the Musselcraig of this powerful romance, has obtained a considerable notoriety, and a world-wide reputation.

To use a hackneyed phrase, "from time immemorial" Auchmithie has been a favourite resort of the guid folks of Arbroath. On the great St Thomas Market day, at Pasche, Yule, Fast Days, and other

high times, the Arbroathians resort to the village, and hold high carnival there. In olden time, before the prosaic railway journeys were the rage, a "Red Lichtie's" greatest ambition, on the anniversary of his patron saint, was to pay a visit to

" Auchmithie, famed for caulkers,  
An' partan tae, an' Lucky Walker's,"

or some one or other of the many places of interest in their immediate neighbourhood, where, to quote the same authority—

" A' resolved ere set the sun  
Themsel's tae steep in drink an' fun,  
As had their fathers and forbears,  
For hundreds dune o' sic like years."

Auchmithie was, however, the great centre of attraction on St Thomas Market day, probably on account of its romantic scenery, and the fame of its hostelry. By an early hour the lads and lasses streamed out of town by the cliffs or Seaton Road, while paterfamilias, with kind consideration for their wives and weans, started on the same pilgrimage in jolting carts and such like vehicles, all bent on fun and frolic. The amusements with which the gude folks in those times wiled away the long summer day among the rocks and craigs and on the beach were numerous and varied. The villagers, with an eye to business, catered for the public amusement, and the annual holiday of their neighbours proved a good harvest to them. At the foot of the brae, on which the village is built, and close to the beach there stood a huge barn-like building which was used as a fish-curing house. On these festive occasions this shed, for it was nothing more, was extemporised into a ball-room, where the lads and lasses could trip the "light fantastic toe" at the moderate charge of a penny a-head. In addition to the attractions of a penny ball-room, there was the pleasure of getting "afoat,

afloat on the fierce rolling tide," which could also be enjoyed once in a lifetime, for the low charge of a penny. During the whole day the fishermen made short trips with their cobbles round the small bay with freights of screeching half-frightened women, who eagerly invested their spare coppers in a sail. On such days, too, the village inn overflowed with guests. From basement to garret not an inch of sitting room could be found, stair and passages, and even the kitchen, cellars, and the bench before the door were crowded with hungry and thirsty travellers. Mrs Walker, familiarly termed "Luckie," with an extra staff of assistants, was kept in a fever heat of excitement, cooking fish for her impatient guests, and supplying liquor to quench the thirst which the piscatory repasts created.

"But all things in their course must change,"

and in nothing has there been so great a change during last half-century as in the way in which the people spend their festive seasons. The opening of the various lines of railway, and the cheap excursion tickets issued at holiday seasons, attracted the merry-makers to more distant scenes on St Thomas Market days. Auchmithie like a poor relation was deserted on that great day, or if the village was honoured at all during the holidays, it was only at the fag-end of the revels, when "heads are sair and purses light." "Lucky Walker" used to say that "sin thae railways began her hoose was nae worth naething." This might have been true of her house on the annual holiday; but for all that she enjoyed a goodly share of the patronage of her town neighbours long after the advent of the "iron roads and steam horses." On Fast days, "Lucky Walker's" was the general resort of those who preferred a ramble along the coast to going to church, and—tell it not in Gath—even on the "Lord's Day, on Sunday," before, ay,

and even after the benign reign of Forbes Mackenzie's Act, *bona fide* travellers not a few were feasted on fried fish and bannocks in Luckie's parlour. But Luckie has gone the way of all living, and the place which knew her once knows her no more. The inn has passed into other hands, and is now, we believe, conducted in a more modern style, and has been dubbed with the high-sounding title of "Waverley Inn."

Auchmithie is well worth a visit, and the tourist, we believe, will meet with good entertainment in the Waverley Inn, though for our own part we have not crossed its threshold since the days of honest Luckie Walker. We still retain some pleasant memories of sundry visits to the quaint little village, and can testify to the flavour of the worthy hostess's fried fish, crisp cakes, and delicious salt butter. The last time we dined in Luckie's hostelry we were favoured with a glimpse of her character, and patronised in a rather novel way by the good old dame. The particular incidents of that visit we have never forgotten.

On a glorious autumn day, after enjoying one of the most romantic walks along the cliffs, we found ourselves in the immediate vicinity of the quiet fishing village. We passed along the narrow lane, which is all that the principal street can be denominated, and found ourself in a small square on the south side of which stands Luckie Walker's famous public. The inn was the most respectable looking house in the village, but like the rest was only one storey in height. Being rather fatigued with our long walk we decided to take refuge in the inn to refresh before we proceeded to "do the lions" of the place. Accordingly we walked in at the open door with as much dignity as it was possible for us to assume on such an occasion. We were left to find our way into the principal room, where we had plenty of time for observation before

our imperious ring at the bell was answered. The room occupied the breadth of the house, and was more like a hall than the parlour of an inn. There were two windows, one looked into the square, and the other commanded a fine view of the bay, and the broad blue sea stretching to the distant horizon. The floor was bare and sprinkled with fine grey sand, the furniture consisted of long tables ranged in rows across the room, with bare wooden forms for seats. There was neither a picture nor print to relieve the plain unpapered walls, and altogether the place appeared homely and unpretending enough.

Our party was small but very select, being composed of an equal number of both sexes. Some of the gentlemen began to show signs of impatience at the unusual delay, and to hasten the tardy feet of the hostess or her attendants, began to thump vigorously on the table with their walking sticks. A few minutes afterwards the door was opened, and in sauntered, not the hostess, but two rather shabby-looking young men. Thirsty travellers like ourselves we remarked, and we pitied their case if they had to wait as long as we had done before they were supplied with the wherewith to wet their mou's. The new comers manifested no intention of fraternising with our party, but took their seats on one of the tables in the centre of the room, and began drumming a tune on the form with their heels. The new arrivals had not been many minutes in the room when there entered a buxom fair-haired waitress, arrayed in a pink print gown with sleeves tucked up to the elbows, which showed her plump red arms to full advantage. The Abigail advanced to the young men, and in a most respectful manner asked them to "come this way." She retired when her mission was accomplished followed by the favoured guests.

At length after a tantalising delay, the worthy hostess made her appearance, and hobbled up to the table at which we were seated. She was a comely comfortably proportioned looking old lady. Her round jovial countenance was admirably set off by the snow white "mutch" which covered her head, and her portly well rounded figure was arrayed in a black stuff gown, protected in front with a clean checked apron. Leaning her two fat hands on the table and surveying each member of our little party with a critical eye, she thus addressed us—

"Weel, sirs, I canna gie ye ony fish the day."

"How that, Mrs Walker?" we inquired in amazement.

"It's no but fat I wad gie ye plenty o' fish, it's no that, but ye see I hae a lot o' gentry wi' me the day. There's the Earl o' N——an' Lord R——, an' twa three mair generals or kurnals, or something o' that kind, an' their leddies wi' them, are a' dinin' i' my braw room; an' ye like to come I'll lat ye see them."

Here was a fix. While the lords of the creation were enjoying their "whitebait" dinner we poor units of the "great unwashed" were left to starve. But were we not offered ample compensation? If our palates were not to be regaled with the dainties, the smell of which was tickling our olfactory organs, our eyes were to be feasted with a "sicht gude for sair e'en." We confess that the temptation to view real live lords was irresistible. Having never seen such exalted mortals we naturally felt a strong curiosity to know what they were like, our notions on such matters being rather crude. The kind old lady pressed her invitation so seriously, and offered to let us see the show all for nothing too, the entertainment not to be included in the "bill," that we allowed her to lead us aside to see the wonderful sight. We must, however, exonerate our lady friends from any participa-

tion in our rude curiosity. Though the fair sex are generally blamed for having a greater share of inquisitiveness than the sterner sex are possessed of, on this occasion they repressed their natural bent, and allowed their male champions to see the show.

Luckie led us to a door on the opposite side of the lobby, and, cautiously opening it, pointed in triumph to the occupants of the room.

"Look !" said the old dame in a whisper, "there they are a' at their dinner."

We did look, and, lo ! there was to be seen a party of ladies and gentlemen just like other mortals, seated round a table covered with a white cloth, on which was spread a variety of dishes. To our surprise, we discovered our two shabby-looking young men among the company. It is impossible to explain our feelings on making this important discovery, for in our own mind we had at first sight set them down as a couple of tailors out on the loose.

"That's the Earl 'imsel' an' that's his leddy sittin' aside 'im," Luckie went on in the same undertone, and with the same sort of pride that the keeper of a menagerie of wild beasts points out and describes the different animals.

"An' that's Lord R—— an' a freen' o' his—Kurnal or Major something."

This last announcement almost took away our breath, for the specimens pointed out by our obliging hostess were, in short, no other than our *soi-disant* tailor bodies.

From first to last we felt heartily ashamed of the whole affair, and feeling afraid lest our presence might be observed by the august assembly, and our rudeness chastised, we shrank back and slunk away to our former quarters, feeling very small indeed. We were followed by the old lady, who asked us in a patronising way—

"Am'n I no braw the day, hae'n sae mony braw fouk i' my hoose?"

Anxious to humour the old lady we made some common place remarks about her house being frequented by all the notables of the land.

"Ay, that's fat it is," she remarked, shaking her head complacently. "A' the braw gentry o' the country come tae see me. There's the Earl has haen never sae mony gentry doon frae Lunnon this summer, an' they a' ca' in an' see me when they come doon tae the beach. It was just the ither week that the Shirra o' Perth an' the Lord Advocate an' some mair gran' lawyers were doon here. They cam' out in a carriage frae Arbroath, an' they had their dinner here, an' ane o' them bade twa or three days wi' me; fat d'ye think o' that na?"

How long the old body would have gone on in this strain it was impossible to say; she had mounted her hobby, and there was likely to be no end of her ride. But, anxious to get some creature comforts for ourselves, we suddenly brought her up by reminding her that we had nothing on the table.

"Ye see I canna cook ony fish the day, there's sae muckle ado wi' my lord an' his friends, but ye can get bread and cheese if that 'ill do wi' ye."

Bread and cheese was poor enough fare; but since our betters had to be served before us, we were fain to be content. Indeed we had no choice; we either had to satisfy our hunger with what we could get or go fasting home, a weary walk of three long miles. Luckie having impressed us with the knowledge of her own importance and the high and elevated rank of her favoured guests, left us to enjoy our humble fare and reflect on our own nothingness in society.

It will thus be seen that "Luckie" was very proud of her house being honoured by so many notable personages. It was a pardonable vanity, and worth

being proud about, for more reasons than one. It is popularly believed in the locality that Scott sojourned for a short period in this humble inn, when he was collecting materials for his famous romance, and the worthy hostess used to speak of her guest with great pride. This might have been the case, but we never heard the good dame allude to this incident. It is quite possible that the "Great Unknown" may have put up in Luckie Walker's, but it is more than probable, if he did so, he would have been *incog.* during his sojourn there. It is just such a spot as a poet would love to dream in. The wild romantic scenery, the beetling crags, the frowning precipices, and yawning chasms that abound at every turn along the coast, and the mighty ocean, spreading out before the eye in its ever-changing moods, afford abundant food for the imagination. Add to this the abundant supply of fish, an article of diet now said to be the best comestible for feeding the brain; a few weeks on such intellectual clover had no doubt strengthened the poet, and sent him back to his study a perfect Hercules in literature. The writings of Scott have excited an interest in many a quiet out-of-the-way corner of Scotland, and sent hosts of tourists to visit some of the finest scenery in our rugged heath-clad land, which, had it not been for the powerful pen of the "Magician of the North," would have been overlooked, and remained for ever in obscurity. Scotchmen are much indebted to their renowned countryman for rendering famous their rugged glens and iron-bound coasts, but perhaps no class owe a deeper debt of gratitude to the author of "Waverley" and the "Antiquary" than the keepers of wayside inns.

## WILLIE PERT.

### A MONTROSE ODDITY.

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THE subject of the following sketch was well-known in Montrose, and his name must yet be fresh in the memory of those who lived in the town rather more than twenty years ago. His character was a strange compound of simplicity and romance. Of course, "Puir Willie" was set down as a fool, and some were even uncharitable enough to aver that there was a good deal of roguery combined with his foolishness. But such an assertion was, to say the least of it, a gratuitous libel on the poor fellow. The only ground such ill-natured people had to base their assertion on was the natural dislike Willie had for hard work. But there are many people in the world who are looked up to as wiseacres who are possessed of as strong an inclination to shirk hard work as Willie had. All geniuses, who live in the airy castles of their fevered fancies, are ever loth to descend from those giddy heights to soil their hands with the vulgar concerns of common every-day life. Willie had a more than ordinary share of romance and poetry in his mental composition, and, soaring continually in the arcadian regions of his own ideal world, it is not to be wondered at if he, poor man, looked upon the drudgery of a sailor's or a coal heaver's life with the supreme contempt of a poet.

In short, Willie was never understood, and consequently never fully appreciated by his fellow townsmen. He was, at least he believed himself to be, a

poet. Prophets and poets are seldom honoured in their own country, at least as long as their bodily presence renders them too familiar to their countrymen ; but when they are dead and gone, and their common clay laid in the "mools," their works, if they live in immortal printer's ink, are discovered to possess beauties never seen before. But poor Willie has not even had this simple justice done to his memory. His works were despised and rejected by a faithless unbelieving generation while he lived, and now, alas ! he is gone, and his effusions have shared the same fate.

Willie was fully conscious that he was a little "crackit i' the brain." If he was a fool, he had as much sense left both to be conscious of and acknowledge his own mental imperfections. He could even tell the cause of his malady, and the time when first he was afflicted. The cause was love—rejected, alighted love—and sair, sair is that to bide. The idol of Willie's heart was a heroine whose praises are still sung in sweet melodies, and whose memory is still green in the hearts of her countrymen. Grace Darling—the brave lighthouse keeper's daughter, who exerted herself so heroically, and successfully rescued from a watery grave a number of the passengers of the Forfarshire steamship, which was wrecked on the Fern Islands—she it was who sent Cupid's dart to the heart of the poetical and romantic son of Neptune.

The story of Willie's romantic and unfortunate attachment is full of melting pathos, although its truth would be none the worse of being supported by some stronger evidence than his own bare statement. Such corroborative evidence has never, as far as we are aware, been brought forward. Still, as Willie's romantic love turned the tide in his affairs to the downward course, we may give the sad particulars as related by himself, leaving our readers to form their

own opinions. To do this it is necessary to give a brief account of Willie's parentage and his own personal history.

Willie's father was the master and owner of a small vessel engaged in the coasting trade, and when his son was old enough to be useful he took him to sea to train him up to the profession. For years Willie sailed with his father, and doubtless would have succeeded him in the ownership of the good old craft had he been mentally capable of managing his own affairs. It was while on a coasting voyage that Cupid's dart pierced the poor fellow's heart, and thence mounted to his brain. The account of this dire catastrophe we give in his own words :—

"We were loadin' slates (Willie always forgot to mention the port of loading) when first I saw Grace Darling. She came aboard o' the sloop, an' I wis juist liftin' a slate at the time whan my een lichted on her bonnie face. I never faund the like afore, something strak me here—pointing to his breast—the slate fell oot o' my hand, an' I cud dae nae mair."

From that day Willie was an altered man. The glance o' Grace's een pierced him to the heart, and henceforth his life was devoted to poetry and love. Cupid's arrow went straight to the mark, and slew puir Willie mentally and physically. Poor fellow, he lacked courage to declare his passion to the adored of his soul, and the noble Grace, whose courage and devotion won for her the admiration of every heart, never knew that one unfortunate wight was pining and dying under the heavy load of a secret and consuming love.

Such was Willie's story, as related by himself in confidence to his friends.

"Slighted love is sair to bide,"

but Willie's case was worse than that. He never had the consolation of being rejected, and perhaps if he

had, the results of his romantic passion would never have obscured his mental faculties.

"Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than ne'er to love at all."

There is no doubt if he had declared his passion and been rejected, and perhaps got his ears boxed by a lily white hand for his presumption, it would have shown him the folly of cherishing such a hopeless passion any longer. But instead of sustaining a salutary defeat Willie buried his secret in his own breast and nourished it into sentimental madness.

Of course there were many who doubted Willie's story, and set it down to a morbid fancy engendered in his weak brain by an inordinate enthusiastic admiration of the heroic daring of that brave-hearted young lady. What tended not a little to confirm this opinion, was the fact that Willie did not adhere strictly to the text of his tale. He sometimes asserted that it was the real Grace Darling he saw and loved, and at other times he said the object of his hopeless passion was Jenny Darling, the heroine's sister. Be that as it may, Willie declared it was true. He felt it at his heart first, and then it ascended by slow degrees to his throat, and threatened to choke him, and at last settled in his head and there it remained. "I find it here," the poor fellow would say, pathetically placing his hand on his forehead, "A' my trouble lies here," and then he would strike up in a doleful strain the well-known song written in praise of Grace Darling.

Burns says that love first inspired him to court the muse. Pert in like manner, fired by love, mounted Pegasus, and essayed to climb Parnassus steep. The sentiment which filled his soul, and burned in his brain, found vent in—

"Stringing blethers up in rhyme,  
For fools to sing."

Willie wrote verses in praise of his mistress's eye-brows, and other foolish things which love-sick swains generally take to raving about. But Willie was fired with the ambition of most poets and rhymsters. There was no use composing verses merely to hide them under a bushel. No, the sentiments they expressed must permeate through the world, and the name and fame of the author must live in the memories of future generations. Willie committed his effusions to paper, but that was not enough to satisfy his longing after immortality. Like Byron, he thought it would be a pleasant thing to see his name in print, but, like many an embryo author, he failed to find a publisher with a soul capable of appreciating the merits of his works.

Willie's ambition was not easily crushed through want of success in obtaining a publisher. Baffled in one quarter, he tried another. Nothing like perseverance; that is the virtue that laughs at difficulties. Willie resolved to obtain the assistance and patronage of the clergy in his laudable endeavours. By this time he had forsaken the sea—or, perhaps, it had forsaken him. His father was dead, and the sloop had passed from his hands, and Willie, poor man, was cast adrift on the cold world. To earn a crust, he worked in a coal yard at the harbour, an occupation he had no love for. One great objection Willie had to the coal business was the fact that his master made him "wirk twa men's wark." This was Willie's statement, but we believe his master had another version of the story.

With his bundle of manuscripts under his arm, his face and garments begrimed with coal dust, Willie honoured the Rev. Dr P—— with a visit one day. Whether it was for the purpose of soliciting the Doctor's name as a subscriber, or to give the worthy divine the pleasure of perusing his manuscripts with

the view of obtaining a favourable criticism, we are unable to say. It matters not. The parson gave Willie a very poor reception, and Willie never forgave him for it. Undaunted with his first advances to the clergy, he presented himself before another brother of the "cloth," with rather more acceptance. The Rev. Mr C——, a dissenting clergyman, spoke kindly to the simpleton, and, if he did not read his poems or become a subscriber, he did "nae send him awa' wi' a sair heart."

The reverend Doctor was far from being an unkind man ; on the contrary, his kindness to the poor and the interest he took in the welfare of the seafaring population, were well and widely known. Willie was, previous to this rebuff, a warm admirer of and a regular attender on the Doctor's ministry, but he became so indignant at his unfeeling conduct that he forsook the old tabernacle where his fathers had worshipped, and attached himself to the flock which Mr C—— tended. In the whole affair, however, Willie acted very foolishly. It was whispered that some mischievous wags were at the bottom of the whole business, who advised poor Willie to appear in his working guise before the Doctor, as the appearance of a poor poet thirsting for fame was more likely to excite his sympathy. Had Willie paid some attention to his toilet—if he had washed his dirty face and donned his Sunday rig—the parson could not have failed to recognise his humble hearer. In his Sunday "claes" Willie was a conspicuous character in the Parish Church, where he sat in the Seamen's Gallery. In figure he was short and squat, his round full face was browned with exposure, and was, withal, regular in its outline and pleasant in its expression. His costume on Sunday was a swallow-tailed brown coat with velvet collar, adorned with brass buttons, a buff waistcoat, and light coloured pants ; and his head was

surmounted with a chimney pot beaver, brown and bare with long service.

Willie felt the rebuff keenly, and in a fit of poetical indignation he poured out his heart in mournful strains, only a line or two of which we can drag from oblivion :—

“Dr P—— was cruel to me,  
And drove me from his door ;  
He despised the poor coal boy  
That wandered on the shore.”

The other productions of the “poor coal boy,” are lost to the world. The only other sample of puir Willie’s muse which we are able to present to our readers, is his epitaph, which he composed years before his death. It is an unique specimen of tomb-stone rhyme, and if it has never been recorded in marble or freestone, and placed at the head of the green mound where repose the ashes of puir Willie, his townsmen ought to perform this simple act of justice to his memory. Here it is, and they can judge for themselves :—

“Wha’s this ’at lies here ?  
Puir Willie Pert, ye needna speer.  
Ou yea, puir Willie, is that you ?  
Ou ay, sirs, but I’m dead noo.”

Such a character as Willie was a never failing source of amusement to the wags of the town. But the fair sex were more inclined to have fun at the poor fellow’s expense than the wags of the other sex were. Willie was a great admirer of the ladies. Though his heart still burned and his head ached with love for the fair heroine of his soul, there was still an empty corner left for others of her sex. Generally speaking, Willie had a host of sweethearts on his hand at a time, who were, according to their own showing, dying in love for him. It was no uncommon sight to see Willie on the Links surrounded by about a dozen

factory or servant girls, each clamorously insisting on him to say which of the fair group was to be the favoured one, till the poor half-witted fellow was almost distracted with their importunities. Of course, where so many candidates were in the field, and their beauty and other merits being nearly equal, it would have taken a wiser head than Willie's to decide. As it was impossible he could marry them all, seeing that

"Tae ane by law we're sti ted,"

Willie very wisely cheered his fair admirers with reciting some love passages from his own works, or singing his favourite songs "Come down stairs, pretty Peggy, O," or "Grace Darling," with the lugubrious sentimentality of a love sick swain.

When thrown on his own resources after the death of his father, Willie lodged with a queer old couple for many years, till he ultimately became unable to maintain himself, and then he was admitted into Dorward's House of Refuge, where he spent the last years of his existence. Johnnie Ross and Lizzie Grubb were a strange couple. Johnnie picked up a living by begging about the country, and Lizzie pursued the questionable calling of a "spae wife," or fortune teller. Old Johnnie at last became so frall that he was unable to visit his charitable friends. But the worthies were not to be cut off from the fountain of charity in consequence of Johnnie's inability to play the mendicant. A very simple expedient, and one that answered their purpose, was adopted, and which had the effect of keeping their existence and wants continually before the public. For more than a year Willie Pert visited some of the principal churches every Sunday morning with a written request for "the prayers of the congregation on behalf of John Ross, in great distress." Occasionally the last clause was varied by the substitution of the words "near death."

So accustomed were the precentors to read this before the minister's opening prayer that they began to consider it as an essential part of the service. The request for the prayers had the effect of exciting the sympathies of the congregation, and the knowing pair never failed in having their temporal wants supplied by the *ruse*.

Lizzie Grubb did a tolerable stroke of business in spacing fortunes, and many a longing maiden crept clandestinely up the dark stair to Lizzie's garret to have a peep into the dark future, "and see what kin' o' a man she was to get," or if she would get one at all. Much of the fortune telling business was carried on under the cloud of night. But Willie the lodger was a great obstacle in the way. The blushing timorous maiden would tap softly at the door, when the crone would admit them with a, "Come awa' in by, dearie." Half ashamed of their errand, and with a fluttering heart, the anxious damsels would advance cautiously into the wretched den and cast furtive glances on every side. Then they would start and make an attempt to retreat, as their eyes lighted on the head of puir Willie encased in a red nightcap peeping out from amongst the bedclothes.

"O dinna be feert, it's only Willie Pert, puir daft creatur', he's sleepin' soun' lang ere this time," the old crone would hasten to say to allay their fears. And as if to corroborate her assertion, Willie would give a snort, turn round like a door on its hinges, and snore loud and long.

Assured that Willie was off to the Land o' Nod, the cards were produced, and the old hag went on with her incantations, Willie, sly rogue, listening all the while. The rascal always made it a point to go early to bed, and pretend to sleep, solely for the purpose of watching the lasses, and hearing all that they in their simplicity said to Lizzie, and what Lizzie said to them,

and you may be sure he made no secret of what passed on such occasions.

Willie's lines fell in pleasant places when he became an inmate of the House of Refuge. Here he was as happy as the day was long. He had nothing to care for, and he was almost freed from the burden of work which he abhorred so much. He had plenty of liberty, too, and he spent his time visiting his numerous sweethearts—a pleasant occupation to a genius of his stamp.

One of the beauties, who received a good deal of Willie's attentions, used to play upon the poor fellow's credulity to her own amusement and that of the other members of the family. The greatest attraction to Willie, however, was the cake and pudding which was liberally supplied whenever he made his appearance.

Willie's attentions were honourable; he was a flatterer, but he flattered not to deceive. "Come with me, my dear, and I'll never lead you in a slippery path," were some of his most ardent protestations. With mock gravity the mischief-loving minx discussed the pros and cons of the proposed union. It was agreed that Willie should keep the house and his better half should be the bread-winner. This plan suited Willie's tastes exactly. The reversion of the respective duties of husband and wife would suit the inclinations of others besides the simpleton. One difficulty suggested itself to the wooer, a difficulty which he could see no way of getting over. How was he to get away from the House of Refuge to join his future spouse.

"I'll tell ye hoo we'll do, Willie," suggested the bride-elect, "we'll mak' an elopement thegither. I'll come some dark nicht wi' a rope ladder, an' you'll escape oot o' the window."

This ludicrous idea tickled Willie's fancy amazingly.

It was the very thing. So romantic too. Such an idea never struck a poet or a novelist before. The idea of a lady relieving her lover by a ladder of ropes was the best thing Willie had ever heard of. The plan was agreed upon, and Willie, elevated to the seventh heaven, was about to take his leave, when a new idea struck him.

"But hoo 'ill we do whan the bairns come?" he inquired with earnest simplicity.

This was more than the lady calculated on. A burst of laughter from her companions sent the blood rushing to her face. Poor Willie was in blissful ignorance of having given any offence, and could not comprehend the meaning of his fickle charmer when she ordered him to the door, with strict injunctions never to show his face again. But Willie was not inclined to pay strict attention to the latter part of the sentence, for he was back again the very next day. But all his wooing could not reinstate him in the good graces of his fair charmer.

Such was Willie Pert, a good-natured harmless fellow. While we pity his weakness, we cannot refrain from smiling at his whims and oddities. It is a pity that weak minds like his should have to drudge for bread. Their mental and physical constitutions are not well adapted to battle with the stern realities of life. Naturally, they are children as compared with the sturdy natures of those around them, and it is a pity that their condition in life will not permit them to indulge quietly in their childish fancies.

## PETER GIBSON, AN ARBROATH CHARACTER.

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**B**ETWEEN twenty and thirty years ago Peter Gibson, better known by the nickname of "Quack," used to limp about the streets of Arbroath, and afforded a never failing source of fun to "boys" of all ages. A strange character was Peter, both in person and habits. His appearance was very rough and uncouth. He seldom or never washed his face, and his black rough beard would remain unshaven for weeks together. His clothes, as a matter of course, were correspondingly dirty, and his hat and shoes were well battered, worn, and clouted. As Peter was lame, one leg being shorter than the other, he always wore the heel of the stumpy foot on the top of his shoe mouth, a custom which was often the subject of jeering remarks by the juveniles. As he limped past the young imps would shout after the poor fellow, "Doon yer heel, Quack." Peter could not refrain from resenting such insults, and as his fierce imprecations only added fresh incentives to the rascals, they would jeer and shout at the poor fellow till his feelings became so exasperated that he resorted to stone throwing to rid him off his tormentors.

Such exhibitions were of frequent occurrence, and rendered poor Peter the butt for idle and mischievous characters both old and young. Practical jokes were constantly being played upon him. Some wags remarking about the length of his beard, advised him to singe off the hair, that being a more effectual plan than

shaving. Peter took their "barbarous" advice, and applied a lighted candle to his face, but, as might have been expected, he did more damage to the skin than to the hirsute stubble. On another occasion the wags filled him as fou as a piper, and then blackened his face with burnt corks, and knocked the crown out of his old hat, stuck it on his cranium, rim up like a flower pot, and then turned him into the streets a spectacle to small boys and great men.

It seems to be a sad proclivity of youth to tease weak-minded creatures, but, considering how thoughtless and reckless youngsters generally are, we cannot blame them too severely for their conduct. But older people who ought to have more sense often indulge in wanton sport, regardless of the pain they inflict on their victims. Peter was not only teased by the boys, but men, who ought rather to have protected him from their ill-usage, not only aided and abetted them, but took pleasure in arousing his fierce passions, and making a ridiculous spectacle of the poor fellow. A certain hewer of stone was in the habit of passing Peter's domicile to and from his work, and by way of a little diversion used to "glue" his nose to the dirty window panes and shout "Quack" till the poor maniac retaliated by pouring forth a torrent of oaths. This kind of silly sport the mason indulged in a little too long for his own sake, and much longer than the subject of his mirth cared to endure. Peter resolved to punish the fellow for his impudence, and he succeeded in wreaking a terrible revenge on his low-minded tormentor. The mason, never dreaming of evil in store, came by as usual one day, and coolly laying his arms on the window sill and putting his face to the glass, shouted as usual the offensive epithet "Quack."

"Quack noo ye b——," retorted Peter, aiming a blow with a stone at the face of the impudent rascal. The stone, well aimed, crashed through the glass and

hit the bridge of the fellow's nose with a stunning blow, and brought the "claret" in crimson streams from the sunburnt proboscis. The fellow was rightly served. Peter put a beautiful head on him for once, and sent him away howling with rage and pain.

It was not always so with Peter Gibson. He was not born a fool, and at one time he held a tolerably good position in society. He owned some property, and had a well-stocked grocer's shop, in which he carried on a thriving business. But the poor man's head was turned by love, or "something like it stung," at least so the story goes. Peter "loved not wisely but too well," but his Mysie proved a faithless jade, as she jilted poor Peter and took refuge in the arms of another Joe. The disappointment preyed on his mind till reason gave way, and his future life was blighted by hopeless insanity.

The symptoms of insanity began to show themselves in a savage roughness of manner, which was for some time very perplexing to his friends and customers, till the real nature of his malady was understood.

A dounce woman from the country called one day at Peter's shop with a quantity of butter and eggs for sale. The lady had often transacted business with Mr Gibson, and found him a courteous merchant. Judge of her surprise when on this occasion she laid her basket on the counter, with her customary remark—"Hoo mony pund are ye for the day?" she was answered by Peter lifting one of the lumps of butter and dashing it in her face. The woman in alarm seized her basket, and rushed out of the shop crying—

"Losh keep me, did ever I see the like afore? Peter Gibson's surely drunk or daft."

This was one of his savage moods, but he indulged in freaks which were more ludicrous and less to his

profit. An urchin wanted an ounce of tobacco, and, as young folk will do, laid the coppers on the counter before he was served with the article. Peter whipped up the money, and threw it in the till, and then, handing the boy the end of the twist, bade him run, "an' he wad get the better a bargain." The lad, not comprehending what was up, stared stupidly at the eccentric merchant,

"Can ye no rin, ye little dell," cried Peter, flourishing the ham knife in a menacing manner. Away ran the little fellow with the end of the pigtail in his hand. Peter grinning at the sport, held aloft the glittering blade, till he fancied a sufficient length had run out. He then brought it down on the counter with a sudden blow, like the descent of the guillotine, and severed the rapidly running line, laughing like a fool, as he was, at his own sport. This system of doing business in the tobacco line soon began to be pretty widely known, and cute customers fleet of limb would contrive to haul away several yards before Peter could manage to cut the connection. Such erratic doings soon rendered Peter notorious. It soon became evident that he was incapable of conducting his business, and his friends very wisely wound up his affairs, and left him free to indu'ge his freaks in other ways.

After he gave up the shop he took to the loom, and worked industriously for some time, but getting tired of the "four stoops" he fell foul of the machine one day, and smashed it to pieces. He next took it into his head to walk to the parish of Kinnell every day and back again, a distance of eight miles, without any apparent object in view. This whim secured him the nickname of the Duke of Kinnell, which the mischief-loving urchins occasionally saluted him with. The next object which engaged Peter's attention was the manufacture of birds' cages, an art in which he became rather famous.

After his mental misfortune Peter lived for many years in a house in East Abbey Street. The house was his own property, and he did with his own just as he pleased. When the bird cage mania seized him, he used up the remains of the old loom to make bottoms, seed boxes, and side spars for his cages. Peter made these articles and sold them, and his fame as a cage maker spread far and wide through the town, extending even to the parishes of St Vigean and Inverkeillor beyond. Peter, therefore, found ready sale for his works of wire art. In course of time he used up all the wood of the old loom, and, as the demand was still increasing, he was driven to his wits' end to procure more timber. Of course he could have bought wood to suit his purpose, but if he spent money in buying wood the profits off the sale would be very considerably diminished. So, no doubt, reasoned poor Peter, there was no use spending money on wood so long as he had plenty of it at hand within his own domicile. He first laid violent hands on a wooden stair which led up to the garret, and with saw and axe he cut away step by step, till the stair was entirely demolished. Of course the steps were only taken away one at a time, just as he stood in need of them, but at length the last step was used up, and nothing but a vacant chasm remained. Peter was very fertile in expedients. It would have been a matter of some difficulty for any ordinary individual to have found a way of ingress and egress after such a demolition of the mode of ascent and descent, but Peter was equal to the emergency. Long before the stair entirely disappeared he had contrived a novel mode of "getting upstairs." By means of a strong rope, fastened at the top, Peter slid down, and swung himself up to the lumber room with the agility of a monkey. The stair in course of time was converted into cage bottoms, and sold, and still the cry was more,

more. Peter became desperate. What would he cut up next? The rafters above his head were good solid lumps of timber, and on these he next laid hands, and cut them away by piecemeal, till there was scarcely sufficient support left for the floor above.

Doubtless he would have gone on demolishing his house till it fell about his ears had not his neighbours got alarmed at the danger which threatened both them and the poor monomaniac. His friends took counsel together, and they succeeded in advising Peter to stop both his labours of construction and destruction. Bird cage making was therefore abandoned, but his restless spirit soon conceived new ideas, and opened up new spheres for the exercise of his physical powers. He conceived the bold idea of levelling the "bents" or "bunkers," a long range of sand hills that skirt the seashore to the west of the town. Such an idea was worthy of a Stephenson or some embryo engineer, but for a single individual to attempt the herculean task with his own hands, and no other tools than a spade, could only have originated in the brain of a maniac.

The sand hills in question run parallel to the beach for about a mile and a half or so till the line is broken by the junction of the Elliot water with the sea. Beyond the mouth of this stream the links continue along the coast, with slight breaks here and there as far as Broughty Ferry. That part of the "bent" between Arbroath and the Elliot is generally termed the "West Links." Along the sea beach, and among these sand hills the people are free to roam, and a pleasanter promenade or a quieter spot for a ramble or a lounge for a meditative mind is rarely to be found in the neighbourhood of a populous town. Here in summer, children love to play, picking up the shells on the sandy beach, or romping among the grassy knolls. Here, too, on summer gloamin's lads and

lasses stray, and many a soft tale of love has been whispered among the "knowes," under the silver moonbeams, accompanied by the mournful cadence of the mighty restless ocean.

What purpose Peter meant to serve by levelling the "bents" no one ever knew, if he, poor man, had any definite idea himself what good or bad end was to be served by his labours. Possibly he had some hazy dream of converting this waste land into a valuable farm or kailyard for his own especial benefit ; or to be more charitable, perhaps he meant to clear away the "heights and howes," and convert the miniature Alps into a level bowling green or cricket ground for the benefit of his fellow townsmen. No matter, whatever were his intentions, Peter resolved on laying the "bents" low, and like a Hercules he went at his self-imposed task with a will. "From early morn till dewy eve" Peter kept at this work with a vigour and determination worthy of a better cause. Few of his neighbours saw him depart in the morning, for Peter took time by the forelock, and was up with the sun. Throughout the long hours of the summer day he digged away, only resting to eat a bannock and get a drink of water, and at night he would crawl home to his den utterly exhausted. A few weeks of such work, however, cooled his ardour, and at length he gave up the enterprise and retired from the field.

Another engineering experiment took up his attention, but this time the object aimed at was rather more definite. Behind his house was a tolerably sized garden, in which he grew kail and potatoes, and other homely pot herbs. Here Peter resolved to sink a well, but the plan he adopted to get water from the "flinty rock" was not in accordance with the mode adopted by skilled well sinkers. Instead of sinking a shaft of prescribed circumference, Peter commenced a gradual excavation of the whole area of the "yaird." Around

the ground he dug away till the hole assumed something like the appearance of a gas tank or a quarry. Like the former enterprise he acted both as engineer and labourer, with no other tools except a half-worn spade. Still, even in this Quixotic attempt he showed no little ingenuity in carrying on the work. As the hole began to deepen, and he could no longer throw out the earth with his spade, he constructed a set of terraces from the centre to the outer rim, on which he continued to shovel the loose earth from one to the other, till it was deposited on the mound on the outside. Such a plan was slow and tedious, but the poor fellow continued at it with praiseworthy perseverance till he reached a good depth. There is no saying how far down he might have carried his excavations had not his labours been put a stop to by the authorities, fears being entertained that he would undermine the adjoining houses.

Such are some of the eccentric doings of this local madcap. He was at last taken care of by some friends, and although for the most part he was harmless, they very wisely got him confined in a neighbouring lunatic asylum, where he closed his earthly career.

One of his former acquaintances once called to see Peter in the asylum, when he found him busy working in the grounds. A squad of patients were engaged excavating a sand hill, and Peter seemed to be superintending the labours of the gang.

"How are you getting on, Peter?" inquired the visitor.

Peter, without raising his back from his work to look at his questioner, naively replied—

"Fine, man! fine, man! if I cud only get thae lazy deevils tae work."

## JAMIE CLOUDSLEY,

## A METHODICAL MENDICANT.

FROM time immemorial, and till within a very recent date, beggars were a regular institution, and in many respects a privileged class. The "puir bodies" of the olden times were a superior order of paupers to the whining mendicants who now infest our streets, and clamour for the "smallest mite," and appeal to the sympathies of the public by displaying withered arms, amputated-legs, and naked sickly children; or creep surreptitiously from door to door, cloaking their real purpose of soliciting alms under the guise of "flying stationers" or peripatetic vendors of needles, pins, and such like small wares. The beggars who roamed the country in the days of our grandfathers, and great-great-grandfathers, had no fear of Vagrancy Acts, Police, or Poor Laws, before their eyes. They wandered at will, from place to place, and were supplied with food and shelter, such as it was, which they received not in the spirit of suppliants or dependents, but as their just right and privilege. "Gangrel bodies," in these days, were always welcomed in the squire's ha', the farmer's ingle nook, and the humble cottar's hearth with genuine hospitality.

It required a certain degree of natural talent to follow the profession of a gabarlunzie in the olden times. While the beggar sought and obtained his food and quarters either in the "barn or by the kitchen fire," as his right, he was at the same time

expected to give something in return. In those days the beggars and the "chapmen" were almost the sole medium by which news were transmitted through the country, and those who lived in remote rural districts looked forward to the visits of these wandering news-agents with eager anticipation. The "gangrel body" was generally a shrewd, pawky carle, who could tell a good story, crack a joke, sing a song, and retail all the gossip and scandal about everybody, gentle and simple, current in the country side both far and near.

The wandering lives of these restless beings must have in some respects been a jolly free-and-easy sort of existence. They had no fear of the law before their eyes, and could trudge along through green lanes and shady woods, and across the open moorlands, surrounded by all the beauties of nature, and rejoice in their freedom in unison with the feathered tribes that hopped from spray to spray, and filled the woods with their joyous melody. The summer time was no doubt a season of exquisite delight to these nomads. But against this they must have been compelled to endure great hardships and privations in the winter seasons, when old age had to contend against the inclemency of the weather, ill-protected during the day in their "looped and windowed raggedness," and—

"To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,  
When banes are crazed and blood is thin,  
I dootna's great distress."

Old age, thin blood, and crazed banes, were in most cases the beggar's charter, though there were not wanting in the fraternity many sturdy mendicants, who would now-a-days be considered fit candidates for the treadmill. Yet generally such supported their rights to ask an "awms" under the cover of real or pretended mental imbecility, and played the fool or privileged jester in their ragged livery to good purpose.

As in every other class of society, there were various grades in the begging profession. The highest rank which could be attained in this walk was the aristocratic position of a "blue gown" or King's bedesman, an honour which was conferred on a number of poor men equal to the age of the reigning king. This custom of granting a special license from Royalty to beg in the King's name is a very old one, and was kept up down to as late a period as the reign of George the Third. The custom was a relic of Popery. The "puir men" were granted this particular privilege, on the express condition that they were to pray specially for His Majesty—a very cheap way of securing the devout petitions of the faithful on behalf of the monarch. The number of these praying beggars was equal to the years of the king's life, and one was added to their number on the anniversary of His Majesty's nativity. On that auspicious day the blue gowns assembled in Edinburgh, and the new candidate having been supplied with a gown of light blue cloth and a pewter badge—the uniform of the praying fencibles—they were then each presented with a purse containing as many shillings Scots, i.e., pennies sterling, as the number of years His Majesty had attained. Then they were treated to a sermon by one of the King's chaplains, who doubtless enforced on the minds of the blue gowns the necessity of besieging Heaven with their petitions in favour of the King, in consideration of his munificent bounty, more of which they were still to receive. The sermon over to the satisfaction of all concerned, and to the bedesmen more particularly, the blue body guard were next feasted on bread and ale at the King's expense. It was considered an honour to be elevated to the rank of a blue gown by "puir bodies" in those days, and only men who had a sterling character, or who had served in the army, were so promoted. Scott, in the

character of Edie Ochiltree, delineates the general characteristics of the class. The shrewd, pawky blue gown who figures so prominently in that inimitable romance, the "Antiquary," was sketched from a real person, whom the author knew in his own district of the country. Andrew Gemmel, the prototype of Edie Ochiltree, was a remarkable character, and Scott tells in his notes to the "Antiquary" some remarkable characteristics of the old beggar. He never wanted money, and would often play cards for large sums with country gentlemen. "The beggin' trade was wirth forty pounds a year at one time," Andrew was heard to say, but times were changed, "an' if he had twenty sons he widna learn ane o' them his ain trade." Scott also mentions a blue gown who used to stand at one of the gates of the Edinburgh University soliciting alms, who maintained a son as a student in the theological classes of that same college.

Besides the gaberlunzies and blue gowns who had no fixed place of abode, there were numerous mendicants who located themselves in certain districts, and perambulated the country round their centre, in regular and unvarying rounds. Such a character was Jamie Cloudesley, who was well known in Montrose and the surrounding country in the beginning of the present century.

Jamie was a genuine child of nature, simple minded, good natured, blythe and cheery, as the lambkin friskin' on the lea. He played the madcap for the amusement of others with right good will, but, fool though he was, there was method in his madness as will be shown. His personal appearance was of the most grotesque and ludicrous description. A thin slender figure clad in knee breeches of corduroy, torn, rent, and soiled with mud, and shining with grease, his hose and clooted shoon, bearing equally the marks of miry roads. Around his body was wrapped a

tattered blanket that fluttered in the breeze, and could only barely protect the wearer from the cutting east winds, or the scorching rays of the summer sun, and to crown all, his good humoured face, innocent of soap and water, was almost concealed by a thick grizzly beard, and the broad brim of an old battered hat. Add to this queer rig a large pock slung by his side to hold meal and other odds and ends he might pick up, and a stout fir stick to support his tottering steps—you have a portrait of Jamie Cloudsley as he used to perambulate the country in days of yore.

Jamie's home was at Bourtree Bush, on the road between Bervie and Montrose, and about some six miles from the latter place. There, in a rude hovel, he lived with two sisters, who were weak in body and mind, and almost helpless. Jamie had a great love for his poor sisters, and to his honour be it said, he supported them solely off the proceeds of his begging expeditions. With his pock slung over his shoulder, and his trusty cudgel in his hand, poor Jamie left his home in the morning to cadge the country for his own and his helpless sisters' daily bread. A very methodical beggar was Jamie. He had a particular day for visiting each part of his extensive circuit, and so regular and precise were all his movements that his friends could calculate on the exact day and even hour when Jamie would make his appearance.

If Jamie was methodical in his visits, he was even more ludicrously so in his mode of begging. He had a regular fixed day for collecting the different commodities he was in want of, and from this rule he never varied. One day was set aside for taking meal, the next for potatoes, the next for bread, and the next for bawbees ; a whimsical habit in which the guidwives of the country side humoured the poor fellow by complying with his particular request.

When he called at a house he used to open the door without ceremony. There was nothing of the pretended whine about Jamie. Instead of intimating his presence with the beggarly timid knock, he opened the door and stepped "in by" at once, saluting the guidwife with—"Hoo are ye the day? Here's Jamie Cloudeley again."

"Come awa' in by Jamie an' warm yer hands, puir thing; I wis juist expectin' ye. Sit ye doon there, or I see gif I hae a pickle meal tae ye the day."

"Na, I canna tak' meal. I'm i' the patatie way the day," Jamie would reply, if it so happened that the guidwife had mistaken his particular line for the day.

"Ou, weel, I'm sure I nicht hae kent ye werena takin' meal if I had ta'en ony thocht," the guidwife hastens to reply; "but ye'll no want potatoes. Here, had oot yer pock."

Jamie having got served prepares to tak' the gate ance mair, when the guidwife intercepts him with "Ou, what's yer hurry, Jamie; ye maun gie's a sang afore ye gang. I hinna heard ye sing this while o' days."

Singing was one of the many accomplishments which he was ever ready to display for the edification of his numerous friends. Jamie had none of that false modesty which is too often displayed by vocalists when pressed in social gatherings to delight the senses of their friends with their ravishing strains. It is pitiable to observe the modest blush and the affectation which some people assume when called upon to contribute a little to the amusement of the hour, while all the time these very individuals are panting to distinguish themselves, and would feel deeply insulted if they were overlooked. I have heard the remark in such social meetings that "gude singers needed a deal o' priggin'." If such a remark

holds good in every case, I am afraid it will be apt to throw discredit on Jamie's abilities, for he, simple and unaffected to a fault, never required a second invitation to warble his sweet notes. Erecting his grotesque figure, and cocking his musical eye quite sentimentally, and after the most approved fashion of the professional *artiste*, Jamie starts off at once in a strong nasal tone with his favourite and only song, "O, Willie he has gaen to France."

Music was only one, and that the least of the many accomplishments Jamie boasted of, and was ever ready to display. Like the famous Bouldy Buchanan "he kened a' the stars and names o' the planets," could work a problem in mathematics or navigation, and deliver an oration in Greek or French, or some other heathenish jargon. His linguistic powers were most frequently in requisition, and a speech from Jamie in French was the greatest amusement he afforded to his numerous auditors. "Come, noo, Jamie, gi'es a wurd o' yer French," some one would say, when the poor fellow would assume the attitude of an orator, and thus pour forth amidst peals of laughter something like the following unintelligible rhapsody. :—

"Birkham ramskite skeeliter, scatter yer water, fire an' tow, stoor'd oot, droon oot the low, an' that's the end o' the parle vow."

We leave it to scholars to translate Jamie's French. Like his mathematics and navigation problems, it is too profoundly erudite for us to attempt to render it into plain English or broad Scotch.

Jamie often visited Montrose, and was a well-known character in the town, but it was not expressly to beg that brought the simple fellow to visit the town ; but to procure some trifling article of necessity, such as a bawbee worth of spunks, or some such like trifle. Whenever he made his appearance on the streets,

Jamie was sure to be surrounded by a crowd of admirers, both old and young, eager to be amused at his expense. Besides his song and famous French oration, Jamie was well posted up in military lore, and could describe to wondering listeners how the "kiltie regiments" whipped the French, and in the enthusiasm of the recital he would—

"Shoulder his stick, and show how fields were won."

Shouldering his fir cudgel for a musket, hewheeled, and faced right and left, marched and counter-marched, to his own imitations of a drum. Then coming to a halt, he grounded arms, loaded his imaginary firelock, presented and fired, crying "pitough" as loud as he could bawl as he pulled the trigger. Of course, the mob who gathered round poor Jamie to laugh away an idle hour at his simple exploits, were generous enough to reward the poor body for his efforts to amuse.

Jamie did not always follow the profession of a beggar; he only took to that occupation when unfit for hard work. As Burns says in his "Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet":—

"The last o't, the warst o't,  
Is only juist to beg,"

an alternative which even a mind like the poet's could contemplate in those days with a sort of gloomy pleasure. To Jamie, the "last o't" proved not such a dread calamity after all. I remember a line of an old song which ran something like this—

"O' a' the trades 'at e'er I tried  
The beggin' is the best;  
For whan a body's tired oot  
They can sit doon an' rest."

And there is no doubt that Jamie found the gaberlunzie trade a trifle less irksome and fully as profitable as trudging behind a drove of Highland cattle for long weary miles day after day. The occupation

of a drover, which Jamie followed in his youth, must have been in his time a weary, laborious sort of life. A great proportion of the cattle which provided roast beef for our Cockney friends in the last century were reared in the Highlands of Scotland. The dealers sent their live stock in droves, travelling them on foot all the way to London. To follow a herd of lowing nowte for five or six hundred miles must have been very fatiguing. Such was the life Jamie followed in his youth ; a life of hardship and danger, but which inured him to stand the inclemency of the weather, and trained him to live contented and happy on the coarsest fare, in the miserable shelter of a mud hovel. .

In the course of his drover life Jamie made frequent visits to London, and once it was said he was as far south as Dover. Like all travellers, Jamie was inclined to bounce about the sights he had seen abroad ; but this is a pardonable vanity, and is only regarded as an amiable weakness in persons of more exalted station than poor Jamie. In those days a visit to London was something to boast of ; and the wonders to be seen in the great metropolis were believed to be of the most extravagant description by the simple country people of Scotland. Jamie therefore had all the latitude of a privileged orator when he launched forth about the magnificence of royalty, and the other wonderful sights "o' the muckle toon o' Lunnon." Travelling is considered by the upper ten a great means of education, and under pretext of studying men and manners, shoals of English travellers are constantly crossing channel to pursue such pleasant studies. It was while on his travels that Jamie acquired those stores of knowledge, which he turned to so good account in his after life. If any one asked him where he learned to "parley vou," Jamie replied, "Whaur dye think a body cud learn French but i'

France to be sure, an' wisna I at Dover ance, an' that's juist neist door til't."

As we have already remarked, begging is now prohibited by law, and vagrancy and mendicancy punished as a crime. If it were not so now-a-days, the country would be overrun with hordes of these social pests, and, even with such Acts in force, the streets of our cities and rural highways and by-ways still swarm with bands of idle marauders, who prowl about, under pretence of extreme poverty, ready to purloin any little article they can conveniently lay hands on. It is of dire necessity that such should be put down with the strong arm of the law. Still we think an exception should be made in cases like Jamie Cloudsley. It might be as well to allow such weak-minded creatures to wander at their own sweet will, and pick up their living from the charitably disposed, as to coop them up in a poorhouse and put them to sedentary work, which neither their minds nor bodies are fitted for. Jamie, by being allowed to wander the country, was enabled to support his two imbecile sisters and himself, and those who contributed to their support felt all the happier for having done so. The trio in their wretched hovel might have been provided with more comforts in a public institution, but it could not have made them happier. In each other's society they were as happy as it was possible for them to be. The same golden cord of love which binds the rest of mankind in family bonds also attached them to each other, and if that cord had been cut asunder by human laws, they would have been rendered truly miserable. In reality, human happiness springs from the condition of the mind and heart, and not from the amount of social comforts or luxuries with which we may be surrounded.

## THE ODDITIES OF AN AULD LIGHT CONGREGATION.

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**T**HE Scotch Dissenters were long characterised for their rigid observance of the simple forms of worship practised by the early Reformers, and their strict adherence to the orthodox doctrines of the Confession of Faith. There was, to say the least of it, a certain degree of spiritual pride amongst many Dissenters, which spirit was maintained till recent years ; and amongst the small bodies in small towns, this strait-laced piety was developed to the verge of eccentricity. In very truth these quaint Seceders strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel, for they were most rigid and severe in their observance of the minutest trifles, and expressed their abhorrence of innovations with the sturdy independence so characteristic of Scotchmen generally.

About fifty or sixty years ago, one of these dissenting bodies not a hundred miles from Montrose, was composed of as strict a set of douce stern pietists as could well be found. Both pastor and flock were a strange compound of heresy-hating Dissenters. The parson's sermons were invariably composed of denunciations of the doctrines and practices of other sects. Setting out generally with an exposition of some evangelical doctrine, the good old preacher would—

“ —Clear the points o' faith  
Wi' rattlin' an' wi' thumpin'.”

to the satisfaction of himself and his hearers no doubt. He would then launch forth by way of ap-

plication on a controversy with Arminianism or any other ism that differed from his own peculiar ism. Such discourses kept the Seceders well posted up in the heterodoxies of other sects, but it fostered a spirit of uncharitableness towards all who differed from their views.

In those days the sermons were interminably long, and as prosy as they were lengthy. The style and composition never deviated from the beaten track of the old school of divines. They were divided into six or seven heads, with as many particulars in each head, and a lengthy application divided into four or five different remarks. The heads and particulars of the sermon were made the subject of family catechising between the diets of worship by the douce heads of families. After coming home from church, the juvenile members of the family were put upon their trial before the parental tribunal, and if they were found wanting in their knowledge of the text and the "heads," they were subjected to severe reproof for their inattention. One douce parent, while thus exercising his priestly authority one Sabbath, was answered very indifferently by some of the elder branches of the olive tree. In righteous indignation, he turned to a chubby-faced maiden of some eight or nine, and inquired, "Come, Jenny, can you tell me fou mony heeds the minister had the day?"

Jenny thought for a moment, and then replied, with artless simplicity, "I didna see 'im hae ony mair than ane."

Long prosy sermons have a sad tendency to set listless hearers asleep; even the stern, rigid Seceders felt the seductive influence steal over them in the middle of their worthy pastor's harangues. But, like staunch old Puritans, they manfully grappled with and overcame the enemy in a fashion that would be regarded now-a-days as unseemly. It was no uncommon thing,

when the minister would be announcing his "Fourthly, my brethren," to see a venerable elder rise up in his pew and stretch his arms above his head, yawn, and emit an audible "Ho, his !" and then with the utmost gravity he would prime his nose with a hearty pinch of snuff and passed the mull down the pew to regale his brethren. As the sermon drew its slow length along, here and there through the church others would be seen indulging in what the Irishman called "a standing seat."

In the service of praise they were ludicrously prejudiced. They tenaciously clung to the primitive modes of congregational singing, and any attempt at improvement was long and stoutly resisted. It was the custom in bygone times for the precentor to read aloud the line before singing it. This custom is now obsolete, with the exception of Communion seasons, when, during the filling of the tables, the leader of psalmody repeats the lines he is going to sing. And even here it may with comfort both to precentor and congregation be abandoned. In early times the practice was essential, owing to many of the humbler classes being unable to read. But even in this custom improvements were made before it was entirely abandoned. The original plan was to read only one line before singing, but an innovation called the "running line" began to be adopted. The running line was simply the reading or chanting two lines together on the key of the tune, which, doubtless, had the effect of keeping the precentor from losing the key-note or sticking the tune, a not unfrequent occurrence with precentors in those days.

But this slight innovation met with a stout resistance from our strict Seceders. The first time the precentor tried it, a venerable "auld licht" rose and left his pew in holy indignation. When he reached the passage he cast a look of pious horror at the delinquent

in the "lecturn," and exclaimed—"That's a gude tune, but it's fair spoilt." And having thus delivered himself, he strode out of the church, shaking the dust off his feet as a testimony against the daring wickedness of the times.

The materials of praise in this congregation were strictly confined to the metre psalms, even long after the paraphrases were in general use in almost every Presbyterian church. The minister, probably as prejudiced as his flock, never ventured to offend their tastes by selecting a paraphrase, and in this respect all went on swimmingly. One Sabbath a stranger filled the pulpit, and being unaware of the strong prejudices of the congregation gave out a portion of a paraphrase at the close of the sermon.

When the paraphrase was announced a worthy "pillar," a veritable Jachin and Boaz of the temple, leaned back in his pew and regarded the clergyman with a look of surprise, over the top of his spectacles, during the reading of the offensive hymn. When the reading was finished, the old man shut his big psalm book with a bang, and pocketed his spectacles in utter disgust. His example was followed by others, and a running fire of book shutting was heard all over the church, and the poor precentor was left to warble through the lines unaccompanied by the congregation.

Such a quaint set of characters as we are speaking of would be long in relinquishing customs which other bodies had discarded. The antiquated mode of administering Church discipline known as sitting the "cutty stool" was kept up till a very recent date. Of course amongst such a small body cases of flagrant immorality were of rare occurrence. Yet in spite of the rigid discipline maintained in their families black sheep occasionally appeared, who strayed from the paths of virtue, and had to be reclaimed from their evil courses and whitewashed publicly before the flock.

One young woman who thus violated the laws of morality was placed on the "stool to answer for't," as Burns expresses it. An old man, very deaf, and moreover of a very indifferent reputation, used to frequent the church as a hearer, but he never got himself admitted as a member. Being, as we have said, very deaf, he used to take his seat close to the pulpit. On the occasion referred to the lady offender was seated in front of the old man and almost hidden from the observation of the congregation by his burly figure. At the close of the sermon the minister bade the woman stand up till she received the ghostly flagellation. Old John—we will call him so for distinction—only imperfectly understanding the minister, and, seeing the lady rise in front of him got to his feet also, and remained standing while the minister went on with his rebuke. The bulk of the audience, not being aware of the real state of the case, went away with the impression that "Auld Porridge," as they styled him, was standing the session with the view of becoming a member, and they were "gled tae think that he had seen the errors o' his ways afore it was owre late."

The church was a plain barn-like structure, with no architectural display either inside or out. But though the congregation detested all appearance of ecclesiastical ornamentation on their chapel, they wished to be as comfortable in winter as possible. For this purpose a small stove was procured by means of an extra collection, and fitted up in a corner of the building. The beadle of course had to light and trim the fire; and as the sermon was long and the stove lively in its consumption of fuel it required to be ministered to in the course of the service. To perform this necessary duty, the beadle left his seat beside the pulpit and walked down the passage between the pews to the corner where the stove stood. Then commenced a

hideous rattling din of pokers and shovels, and smashing of coals, while the stoking process was going on, which if it did not disturb the douce elders or make the minister forget an important particular in the discourse, had the effect of rousing the risibles of some of the junior portion of the congregation.

In the performance of this duty it was very common for the staid old beadle to smear his face and hands with coal dust. Unconscious of his begrimed condition he returned to his seat, and gravely fixed his eyes on the preacher to try and gather up the broken thread of his discourse.

A young lad, possessed of a keen sense of the ludicrous, could not refrain from laughing at the beadle when he made these periodical journeys to the stove, and came back more like a coal heaver than a Christian. The father of the precocious youth was a strict disciplinarian, and whenever his son so far forgot himself as to laugh at what he could not well help, the indignant parent drew from the capacious pockets of his overcoat a pair of leather "tawse," with which he administered some sound whacks on the young scoffer's back.

The beadle was a dainty man, but rather negligent of his personal appearance. But he was no worse in this respect than the minister and some of the office-bearers, who on more than one occasion rendered themselves ludicrous by the disarray of their attire during divine service. It was the custom of the male members of the congregation to walk to their pews with their hats on, and remain in this disrespectful attitude till the preacher ascended the rostrum to begin worship. A certain elder, more than ordinarily staid in his demeanour, one Sacramental Sabbath took his seat in his pew, hat on head as usual. The worthy elder's face was even graver than ordinary on this occasion. He had donned his sacramental neck-cloth

for the solemn services of the day, and no doubt was wrapped in contemplation too deep to pay any regard to mundane things. As the minister took his place in the pulpit, Saunders removed his head gear, when lo! a shower of daisies and buttercups fell gracefully round his portly person from the interior of the well-brushed beaver. It was afterwards ascertained that one of the elder's little prattlers, in defiance of parental prohibition, had slipped out that morning to the green, and returning with a lapful of gowans, had taken it into its silly head that the safest place to deposit the flowery treasures would be "da's" Sunday hat.

The little congregation was chiefly composed of the "hardy sons of toil," and being few in number they maintained a brotherly communion with each other, which is but too rare in larger bodies composed of different classes of society. When the congregation were dismissed the gentlemen would gather in little knots at the door and walk home together discussing the merits of the sermon, while their ladies would follow suit, commenting on the sermon also, or perhaps indulging in a little gossip by the way.

A coterie of husbands were proceeding leisurely home in this fashion one Sabbath, followed by their wives. Amongst the men was a deformed person, whose wife, being a little deaf, was in the habit of speaking her sentiments in a louder key than was absolutely necessary. The minister in the course of his sermon that day had alluded to the wonders of Nature. Janet had been much struck with this part of the discourse, and on the homeward route she gave vent to her thoughts in tones loud enough to be heard by all the people on the street—"Eh, ay, sirs, wonderfu' are the works o' Nature; juist look fou wonderfu' shapit oor Tam is."

The pastor who for many years ministered to this humble flock at last became old and infirm. A young generation less frigid in their ideas began to take the places of the old members, and it was resolved to have a helper and successor. For nearly half a century their respected pastor had ministered to their spiritual wants for a salary of eighty pounds per annum. On this miserable pittance he had to rear a large family in gentility, and, as a natural consequence, the good man had enough to do to make both ends meet. It was well known that he used to cobble the bairns' shoes, and resort to various other unclerical expedients to economise the domestic expenditure. And now in his old age the people who had enjoyed the labours of his faithful ministry came to the resolution to reduce him to the half of his salary for the remainder of his life.

Of course the flock were poor, and to provide a successor they were charging themselves with an extra burden, and the old pastor being fully alive to the financial position of the congregation, cheerfully acquiesced in this arrangement.

Candidates for the pulpit presented themselves in considerable numbers. They were all young men, 'just out,' and eager for a charge. But such a stiff lot were ill to please in the qualifications of a pastor. The probationers took their turns in preaching, and while they were resident in the town they were kindly lodged with one of the few wealthy pillars of the little temple. Ostensibly this hospitable entertainment of the young ministers was very generous and Christian like, but in reality they were placed there under a strict system of espionage. Their daily walk and conversation was strictly noted and commented on, and any little peculiarities in their behaviour were brought forward as detrimental to their candidature.

At that time reading manuscript was strictly prohibited in the dissenting bodies. One of the first probationers who came forward forgot his sermon. He announced the text, but beyond this he could make no more of it. In despair he gave out a psalm to be sung till he could collect his scattered thoughts. But it was no go. When the singing was ended he was as bad as before, and though he did not rush out of the church like Dominie Samson he was compelled to dismiss the congregation.

Another of these young men gave mortal offence by quoting in the course of his sermon Burns' well-known lines in "Tam o' Shanter"—

"Pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You pluck the flower, its bloom is shed."

And a third was characterised as childish, because he kindly rocked his hostess's cradle, and sung a lullaby to sooth the wailing infant, while its nurse was absent for a little.

But at last they found one whom they, or at least a party of the congregation, believed was the right man in the right place. The others who had come before him were shallow theologians, but this one was deep, very deep. They were sure he would fill the church, and they resolved to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of their little Zion—in other words a bigger church was necessary to accommodate the great influx of members and adherents who would be attracted by the new minister.

But the new minister proved so deep, and at the same time so muddy, that no one could see the bottom of the drumly water of life which he poured out to his flock. The new church was finished and opened with befitting ceremony, but neither the church nor the minister attracted any additional sheep to the fold.

The profundity of the preacher continued as great as ever, but as no one ever understood him—if he

even understood himself—a section of the congregation became at last so dissatisfied that they left in a body, and attached themselves to another denomination.

## THE BOMBARDMENT OF ARBROATH.

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IT is our country's boast—and not an empty one either—that for centuries no foreign foe has dared to invade the sacred shores of our “seagirt isle.” During the bloody and protracted wars that characterised the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, and in which Britain played so prominent a part, the tread of foreign armies nor the boom of hostile cannon ever disturbed the peace of our favoured land. While almost every country in Europe was turned into battlefields, and many of the richest cities were besieged and sacked by ruthless soldiers, our fields were never stained with blood, nor the smiling harvest trampled down under the feet of contending hosts, while our artisans and merchants plied their avocations in peace and security. For this amenity and exemption from the horrors of actual warfare we are indebted to our insular position, but chiefly to the power of offence and defence which the nation possesses in our invincible Navy.

Literally, however, we are not correct in saying that during the continuance of the French wars no foreign troops ever landed on our shores. During the Irish rebellion a body of about 500 French infantry landed in the south of Ireland, with the intention of joining the rebels. The fate of this puny invasion was soon sealed; a few marches among the Irish bogs wet their shoes and cooled their courage, and at the first appearance of the redcoats they “skedaddled,”

and were eventually made prisoners of war. During the war, too, several piratical descents were made by French privateers on various unprotected seaports, but invariably these raids were repulsed, or ended in smoke and French bombast. One of these daring attempts was made on the ancient burgh of Aberbrothwick. On Wednesday, 23d May, 1781, Captain Fall of the Fearnought, a French privateer, came to anchor before the town, and after endeavouring to bully the Magistrates into terms, which they would not or could not comply with, he opened fire with his guns on the town. The attack was very alarming, but the result of all the powder and shot expended by the French "brave" was one of the most ludicrous episodes of war ever recorded in history.

The summer afternoon was wearing on, and the lengthening shadows told that the day was far spent. A little knot of fishermen and sailors lounging about the pier head of the quiet harbour of Arbroath descried a very suspicious looking sail in the offing. From her rig they knew that the craft in question did not belong to the port. By the cut of her "jib" she was at once set down as a foreigner, and eager surmises and fears were expressed as to her object in hugging the coast so closely. Old salts levelled their telescopes to make her out, when new causes of alarm were revealed. As yet she displayed no colours, but the row of portholes in her sides showed that she was an armed vessel, and a privateer they feared, from the manner in which she sailed so close to the wind. But it was soon evident that the strange sail meant to cultivate a closer acquaintance with the shore. By her course she seemed to be running for the harbour, and if that was her object she meant mischief to town or shipping. Their fears on this head were further confirmed as the suspicious vessel neared the town. Some small craft lying in the bay were overhauled and

taken in tow as prizes, and their crews sent aboard the privateer as prisoners. But all doubts as to the bold adventurer's intentions were set at rest when the cutter dropt anchor close to the bar, hoisted the French flag, and a boatful of armed men put off from the ship and pulled for the harbour.

The alarm spread through the town like wildfire, and a perfect panic seized the inhabitants. The wildest rumours were circulated among the terrified burghers, which served only to increase the confusion. "The whole French fleet, with a mighty army on board, were lying at 'the back o' the bar, an' they were to burn the toon and massacre the inhabitants.'" The merchant left his shop, the weaver jumped from his loom, the souter threw down his last, and the tailor sprang off his board, the smith dropt his hammer, and lost his heat, and all rushed pell-mell into the street, terror depicted in every face. Artisans in shirt sleeves and aprons, pale with fear, gathered in little knots at the street corners; women ran hither and thither in search of their children, crying, "The French! the French! O we'll a' be killed, whaur's my bairns." Some brave spirits ventured down to the Shorehead, or to the Boulzie Hill, to reconnoitre, but the general cry was "Run, run; flee for your lives; stay not in the city, nor in all the plains, away to the mountains and the woods, away before the town is dung doon about our heads, an' oor sel's an' oor bairns killed on oor ain doorsteps."

Never was such a flittin' seen in Arbroath either before or since.

"And there was mounting in hot haste"—a general stampede of the terror-stricken inhabitants took place. Husbands and wives, followed by troops of children screaming with fear, and only vaguely understanding the cause of all the hubbub and alarm, hurried out by the North Port and up the Den of St Vigeans to

seek shelter in Tarry or Letham woods, or under the hospitable roof of a farmer's barn. It must have been a wild scene, and one that never could have been forgotten by those who witnessed it. The frightened crowd jostling each other in their eagerness to escape, some bearing helpless infants in their arms, others assisting the tottering steps of aged parents ; here a sturdy carle with a bundle of blankets on his back, his better half bringing up the rear, with a child on one arm, and half a dozen more clinging to the skirts of her gown ; others again with no encumbrance, and with less need, staggering under well-filled bags of meal and hastily collected comforts, all anxious to leave their homes and the murderous Frenchmen behind them. Nearly all the townspeople left their homes that night, and spent the weary hours, shivering with cold and quaking with fear, either around bivouac fires, like bands of gipsies, or in barns and outhouses on the neighbouring farms.

The uproar and confusion reached its height as the boat from the hostile ship put into the harbour. The crew were all armed with cutlasses and pistols, and a fierce looking band of pirates they were. As the boat was approaching the quay the leader waved a white rag on the point of his cutlass as a token that their visit, in the first instance at least, was peaceful. The Provost, as in duty bound, received the strangers, who were the bearers of a letter from their chief. The Town Council were summoned in haste, and met in the Town House, where the Provost laid before them the communication from the privateer. The whole proceedings of the Council on this occasion were detailed in a minute of the Council records, which are still extant. As it may be interesting we give the names of the Magistrates and Councillors who met around the Council table at this memorable sederunt :—

David Greig, Provost ; George Hill and Alexander Hay, Bailies ; John Neish, Dean of Guild ; James Kerr, Convener of Trades ; John Ochterlony and John Butchart, ex-Provosts ; Alex. Aberdein, James Renny, and William Fitchet, ex-Bailies ; Patrick Ritchie, William Smith, James Ferrier, William Soutar, David Balfour, and Alexander Vannet, Councillors.

The Council having met, Provost Greig read the following letter he had just received from the captain of the French cutter, then lying at anchor off the town :—

“ At Sea, May 23.

“ Gentlemen,—I send you these two words to inform you that I will have you to bring to the French colour in less than a quarter of an hour, or I set the town on fire directly. Such is the order of my master, the King of France, I am sent by. Send directly the Mayor and Chiefs of the town, to make some arrangements with me, or I'll make my duty. It is the will of yours,

“ G. FALL.”

Like canny Scotchmen, the Council resolved to answer the privateer's letter by putting a question or two. The object was mainly to gain time, and put off the evil a little longer. After some discussion the following reply was sent :—

“ That Captain Fall's letter had been received, but in it he had mentioned no terms. They would be glad to know his terms, which would be laid before the inhabitants, and as soon as their opinion had been collected, an answer would be sent. Meantime, they hoped he would desist from doing the town any injury by firing on it or otherwise.”

On receipt of this answer Fall sent ashore the following :—

“ At Sea, eight o'clock in the Afternoon,

“ May 23.

“ Gentlemen,—I received just now your answer, by which you say I asked no terms. I thought it was useless, when I want you to come aboard for agreement. But here are my terms—I will have thirty thousand pounds sterling at least,

and six of the chief men of the town for otage (hostages). Be speedy, or I shot your town away directly, and I set fire to it. I am, gentlemen, your servant, "G. FALL."

By way of postscript was the following threat :—

"I send some of my crew to you, but if any harm happens them, I will hang up at the yardarm all the prisoners we have aboard. To Monsieurs the chief men of Arbrought in Scotland."

Such a heavy ransom and the threats of the daring Fall put the Magistrates and Council at their wits' end. What could they do? They could offer no resistance to the Frenchman, and yet where were they to "raise the wind?" Some of the Council were for agreeing to the Frenchman's monstrous demands rather than see their red little town levelled with the dust. It was most unfortunate that there were only about thirty soldiers in the place, the rest of the company usually quartered in the town having been drawn away a few days previously. But, while the Council were debating on the momentous question, Colonel Lindsay of Kinblethmont and some of the neighbouring country gentlemen arrived in the town, and their "counsel was for war."

By the advice of the gallant Colonel a verbal message was returned to the privateer's letter, to the effect that he might fire on the town as much as he pleased, and they would endeavour to prevent him setting fire to it as far as was in their power, but the Magistrates could agree to no such terms. When this defiant message was delivered to the Frenchman he stamped on the deck and spluttered with rage. "Sacre, mon Dieu," he would "shot away dat little red town."

A few minutes after the boat got alongside the cutter, the roll of the drum calling the crew to quarters was heard distinctly by those on shore, and great activity was seen to prevail on board. The rattle of the drum sounded like their deathknell in

the ears of the Provost and Councillors, and already they repented their bold and daring defiance of a power they were impotent to resist. Their faces grew pale, their hearts sank within them, and every one held his breath, as they anxiously waited for the demonstration of the Frenchman's wrath. It was not long in coming. A sheet of flame burst from the ship's side, followed by the deafening roar of her whole broadside of guns. The Frenchman was in earnest, and for several hours he kept up a terrific cannonade on the town. Broad-sides followed each other in rapid succession, and the balls whizzed over the harbour and rattled among the roofs of the houses, toppling down chimney tops and crashing in the roofs of many of the buildings. The incessant roar of the guns and the crash of falling masonry rendered residence in the town anything but pleasant, and very wisely all the women and children who had not already sought shelter in flight, now abandoned their homes with all speed. In consequence of this evacuation none of the inhabitants were hurt during the bombardment. But, as will always happen in similar cases, some luckless individuals will be left behind exposed to danger, and there were several cases of this kind in Arbroath on that dreadful night. Sick and aged persons could not be removed on so short notice, and they had to be abandoned to their fate unless some loving ones volunteered, at the risk of life and limb, to stand by them during those trying hours. One instance of this kind was related to the writer by a friend. The wife of a sailor had a sick child. Her husband was at sea; she was afraid to remove her infant, and expose it to the night air, and so she resolved to stay. When the firing commenced she became alarmed lest some of the iron messengers of death might fall through the roof of the house and kill her. All alone with her wailing infant, and

exposed to such dangers, and racked by harassing fears, what a night of misery must she have spent. So acute were her fears that she could not bear to stay in her room; she was afraid to flee the town with so many dangers to be encountered in the streets, and under the impression that she would be more secure, she removed her cradle to the passage, and there throughout the night she sung a tremulous lullaby to her sick baby, amid the thunder of cannon and the crash of falling ruins.

Meanwhile the townspeople were busy making preparations for a vigorous defence. By the direction of Colonel Lindsay a band of brave volunteers, amounting to about ninety, were armed in the best way possible, and these, with the half company of soldiers, were drawn up at the harbour, sheltered by the Ballast Hill. The then harbour of Arbroath was not at all like the present. The splendid seawall which now shelters the harbour from the fury of the ocean was not in existence. The whole harbour consisted only of that part generally styled the old harbour, which had a small breakwater to protect it on the west. To the east stretched a small eminence, popularly known as the Ballast Hill. Behind this natural rampart the forces of the besieged were sheltered during the cannonading, ready to dispute every inch of ground should the privateer's crew attempt a landing. No such attempt, however, was made, and as darkness set in the fire slackened, and ultimately ceased about midnight. During the few hours of darkness the privateer remained quietly at anchor. To prevent a surprise, parties of soldiers and volunteers patrolled the beach to the east and west of the harbour, but the Frenchman evidently had no intention of carrying the town by storm.

At daybreak the firing was again commenced, but this time with less vigour than on the preceding even-

ing. Shots were only fired at intervals in a random way. Either the crew were only half awake, or else the mighty Fall was becoming parsimonious with his powder and shot. Possibly too his nerves were a little shaken at sight of the formidable preparations which had been made to defend the place. During the night half-a-dozen wooden pumps were removed from as many wells, and having been cut into shape and their ends plugged up, were mounted on cart wheels and placed in position on the top of the Ballast Hill. At a distance these caricatures had all the appearance of a battery of field guns, and no doubt the sight of such a formidable array of "barkers," threatening to blow him out of the water, sent a shiver of fear to the Frenchman's heart. The "timmer" battery was a ruse on the part of the besieged; the mock cannon, being more ornamental than useful, were got up more for the purpose of showing the contempt with which the besieged regarded the Frenchman's fire. But the gallant defenders of the city of St Thomas did not rest content with a mock show of strength. As the morning advanced the tide ebbd and left the rocks bare nearly as far out as the bar. Taking advantage of the ebb tide, a band of sharpshooters crept out among the rocks, and harassed the enemy with a galling fire of musketry. The most conspicuous and daring of these skirmishers were two notable public characters, yclept, "Tailor Smithy" and "Satan Barclay." These two worthies crept out to the "Nuckle Rock," and from its shelter they peppered the enemy beautifully. The tailor showed himself more than a man that day, and "Satan's" great namesake could not have wrought more mischief with the same weapons. The two heroes peppered away at the privateer, riddling his sails, cutting his cordage, and spoiling the appetite of more than one of the pirate crew. Not a head dared

show above the bulwarks or at any of the portholes, than pop went either of their muskets, and whiz went an ounce of lead to salute them with. Galled by this unexpected attack, the privateer began to fire redhot shot, with the intention of setting the town on fire. Fortunately for the safety of the place, the redhot balls were either so elevated that they flew over the town and rattled among the "lumheads," or else were so depressed that they were buried in the beach. It was afterwards learned that a skipper who was made a prisoner by Fall purposely deceived him as to the elevation of the town.

About nine o'clock in the morning Fall sent some prisoners ashore with the following ridiculous letter to the Magistrates:—

"At Sea, May 24.

"Gentlemen,—See whether you will come to some terms with me, or I will come in presently to the harbour with my cutter, and cast down the town all over. Make haste, because I have no time to spare. I give you a quarter of an hour for decision, and after I'll make my duty. I think it would be better for you, Gentlemen, to come to me of you on board, to settle the affairs of your town. You'll sure not to be hurt. I give you my parole of honour.—I am, your, "G. FALL."

An insulting message was sent in reply to this bombastical epistle to the effect "that they would be happy to see him on shore, when they would endeavour to give him the best reception possible." A red flag of defiance was also hoisted on a flagstaff at the pier, and "Smithy and Satan," and their brave compatriots rattled away as briskly as before.

Fall again opened fire on the town, but this time his balls were better directed. But it was his last spurt; like the dying whale he was in his flurry. Doubtless afraid that the sound of his guns might bring some war vessel on him from the Firth of Forth, and seeing no hope of his raid being successful, he weighed anchor about midday, and bore out to sea.

Ostensibly he heaved anchor to capture some small craft which hove in sight, but when he secured his prizes, he shaped a course for La Belle France, and left the weavers and tailors of Arbroath masters of the field.

So ended the "Battle of the Brothwick." After all the "sound and fury," it really amounted to nothing; in fact the whole affair was afterwards regarded as a good joke. The damage done to the town was very slight, considering the amount of powder and shot the Frenchman had expended. But, what was a matter for hearty congratulation, the casualties to life and limb were nil. Not a single individual among the brave defenders sustained the slightest injury, and the only lives sacrificed by the fire were a luckless hen and a brood of chickens, who were blown to smithereens and feathers by an unlucky ball. Years after balls used to be dug out of Cairnie Hill, where, it would seem, most of the shot had lodged. Many of these balls were preserved by the inhabitants as souvenirs of the event; and some practical people turned the balls to the peaceful domestic purpose of pounding home grown mustard. This event, however, gave a good proof of the pluck and energy which the people would be likely to display should a foreign foe attempt to invade the country. It might also serve as a lesson to teach foreigners how bravely Scotchmen, and Britons in general, would defend their home and country, and shed their life's blood sooner than submit to a foreign yoke. Shortly after Fall's raid, a battery was erected on the Ballast Hill, which was armed with half-a-dozen six-pounder guns. The battery and Ballast Hill have long since disappeared. The harbour and town of Arbroath has grown into larger dimensions since then, but though now no longer protected by a battery of Royal Artillery, the town can boast of a well-trained

corps of volunteers, who, no doubt, if ever they were required, would be able with their battery on the Common to give a warm reception to any foreign marauder who dared to threaten their good "red town."

## WATER BETTY, A MONTROSE MONOMANIAC.

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**O**LD maids and cats have long been proverbially associated together, and rightly or wrongly these creatures have been looked upon with a certain degree of suspicion and aversion by a large proportion of the human race. But we are strongly convinced that both old maids and cats have been sadly maligned, and treated with neglect and contumely which they did not deserve. The feline race are very useful to mankind when domesticated and kindly treated, and it is well known that the household cat is possessed of instincts and affection for its protector little inferior to the dog. As for old maids, although they have been doomed by the neglect or false-heartedness of the sterner sex to live in single blessedness, it does not necessarily follow that they all become sour and morose, and evil disposed towards the rest of mankind. On the contrary, there are many ladies, who have never entered the married state, who have spent their lives in acts of love and mercy to their fellow mortals, and in whose breasts the milk of human kindness has never been frozen over with a crust of misanthropy. But we are not going to write a dissertation on cats and old maids. It is a universal belief that the one cannot exist without the other; that, in short, the old maid would not be typical of her class without the cat, though the cat is able to exist without such a protector. Taking all things into consideration, however, there is nothing at all surprising in the old maid choosing a cat as a household

pet or companion. Solitude is not congenial to human nature, and a poor forlorn female, shut up in a cheerless "garret," brooding all alone over her blighted hopes, would naturally centre her affections on some of the lower animals, and none would be more congenial as a pet and companion than a kindly purring pussy, with its sleek silky hair and velvet paws. But though old maids, and even some of the sterner sex, have been known to lavish a strong attachment on cats, there are few instances on record where the love of cats developed into such a mania for the feline race as was the case with the subject of the present sketch, Water Betty of Montrose.

Water Betty was long well known in the good old town of Montrose, where, we believe, she was born, and lived, and died. A strange eccentric body was Water Betty, but industrious, honest, and frugal withal. In her dress and personal appearance she was rather an odd-looking body. On week days she wore a humble "frowdy mutch," print gown, and checked apron, but on Sunday she arrayed herself in the gay quaint dress of bye-gone times. Her wardrobe was stocked with wearing apparel of every description, having, it was believed, a gown for every Sabbath in the year. Her dresses were made of rich and substantial materials, but utterly regardless of the tastes of the age, she never altered the fashion of her attire from the style that prevailed in her youthful days. She was, moreover, a quiet, inoffensive, simple-minded, and God-fearing woman, and earned her living by the very meanest of occupations—"a hewer of wood and a drawer of water." Literally Betty carried water for a small fee to any one who wanted her services, and hence the sobriquet of "Water Betty." But honest Betty did not confine her attention solely to the water line. Ever ready with her stoups, she was equally ready with her barrow to fetch a load of sand from the Bents

at the seaside to any thrifty, cleanly housewife who chose to engage her.

By such humble and laborious occupations Betty not only earned an honest living for herself, but, by painstaking and thrift, she saved a considerable sum of money during the course of her lifetime. But Betty's monomania for cats was the one peculiar and outstanding feature of her character. When or how she first began to lavish her affections on the feline race is not definitely known, but in all probability the passion developed itself when, to use a popular phrase, she retired to the "garret" to live and die an old maid. Doomed by choice or necessity to live a life of single blessedness, Betty, like many of her sex, kept a cat to cheer her solitude, till by degrees she became the mistress of a perfect menagerie of grimalkins. She had cats of every kind and colour, tabby and tortoise shell, black, red, grey, tiger-striped, and brown, old toms and young toms, pussies and kittens. Cats of all ages, sizes, and conditions mewed and squealed, gambolled, and "focht an' 'greed the hale day lang" in Betty's domicile, secure from snarling dogs and mischievous urchins. Betty's domestic establishment at last assumed such dimensions that she was compelled to take a separate house for the better accommodation of her cats. Thither she removed the majority of her brood, but the favourites she retained at her own fireside. These she fed, nursed, and pampered more tenderly than the rest; they ate at her own table, and shared her couch at night. An old couple (tortoise shell), whom she denominated "grandfather" and "grandmother," nightly pillowed their heads on her breast, and slept like children in her arms.

But Betty was not content with the natural increase of her family, which, considering the fecundity of the feline race, must have been enormous. She was ever

ready to accept a litter of kittens, to save the doomed nurslings from the water butt, the general fate of the majority of the race, before their eyes can look upon the light. In addition to such presents, she bought cats at all times and seasons, for which she had a fixed tariff of prices prepared by herself. For a tortoise shell she never grudged sixpence, and cats of inferior breed were paid for according to her own standard of value, the lowest price being one penny. When any of the youngsters of Montrose wanted to raise a copper to buy "toffy," or to procure any other childish pleasure, it was quite a common thing to catch a cat, and sell the captive to Water Betty. In many cases Betty's own cats, who had strayed from their snug quarters, were seized upon and carried back, and sold to their mistress, so little knowledge had she of the individualities of her own pets. On one occasion a mischievous young minx sold the same cat three times in one night to poor Betty, extracting a penny from her over each transaction. A slattern, who loved the gill stoup better than the teapot, to raise the wind one night seized her household cat in her arms, and hurried with puss to Water Betty. A bargain was soon struck. The slattern got threepence, the price of half a gill, and Betty got the cat on her lap. The woman moved towards the door with reluctant steps, casting back longing eyes on her cat. She held the door half open for a minute. She cast a lingering look at Betty, who was busy stroking the back of her new acquisition. The slattern regretted the sacrifice she had made, and, turning a wistful look at her old favourite, she cried dolefully, "Pussy, pussy, puir pussy." Quick as lightning puss sprang off Betty's knee, and bounded after her mistress, and reached home before her.

You may be sure that Water Betty's cats lived in clover, in fact it was a perfect cat's paradise on earth.

At the hands of their indulgent mistress they were fed like "fechtin' cocks." For breakfast they had galore of porridge and oceans of milk ; at dinner they were regaled with fish, collops, livers, lights, and other feline dainties. Their provisions were carefully cooked, and served in clean dishes by Betty's own hands. When any of her interesting family fell sick she had them removed to a separate apartment, which she termed the "Hospital." There invalid pussies and asthmatic grimalkins were laid on soft warm beds, fed with gruel, warm milk, sugar, biscuits, and such like delicacies to tempt their weak appetites. And when grim Death stalked into their midst and laid his hand on her dear pets she gave them decent burial, and arrayed herself in mourning attire, and grieved for their loss as bitterly as if they had been her own flesh and blood.

One fine summer day some boys, who had played truant from school, while amusing themselves by digging among the sandhills that stretch along the seashore, they came on what they imagined was the body of a child, wrapped up in a piece of fine white linen. The lads were frightened at the discovery, and ran home in terror. With bated breath they told that they had seen the corpse of a bairn buried in the sand. The harrowing tale flew like wildfire all over the town, and in due time it reached the ears of the authorities. A *posse* of constables were despatched to the spot without delay. In due time they reached the seashore with half the population at their heels, and to their horror the body was discovered half-exhumed and wrapt in a winding sheet that had once been as white as snow. Carefully the body was disinterred and borne slowly and solemnly to the Police Station, where a medical man was waiting to make a *post-mortem* examination. When the preliminary arrangements were completed, the authorities

removed the winding sheet, when to their horror and consternation they found the carcase of a tortoise shell cat. The powers that be were indignant and furious ; the gravity which characterised their proceedings had rendered them ridiculous in the eyes of the community. It soon transpired that the dead cat had come from Water Betty's establishment ; that, in short, it was none other than " Old Grandfather" himself, who had " shuffled off this mortal coil," and his sorrowful mistress had wrapped his body tenderly in a gentleman's linen shirt, ruffles and all, and buried him among the sand.

Betty and her cats had long ere this become obnoxious to the authorities, and this last escapade filled up the measure of their iniquity. After long and serious deliberation, it was resolved to exterminate Betty's feline colony, as its existence was considered to be detrimental to the sanitary condition of the town. In blissful ignorance of the plot which was hatching against her and her cats, Betty left home to spend a few days with her friends in a neighbouring town. During her absence a raid was planned against the cats. A band of rough fellows, armed with cudgels, and accompanied by three or four dogs, surrounded the cats' barracks one night. The doors were securely barricaded, and the dogs let in by the window, while the gallant bipeds stationed themselves round the building to cut off the retreat of the doomed garrison. The dogs rushed eagerly on their prey, and the murderous work went on inside in earnest, and when any of the victims attempted to escape by the windows they were quickly beaten to death with the murderous bludgeons. A very short time sufficed to complete the massacre of Betty's cats. When that poor body returned home and learned what had happened during her absence she wept like a child, and would not be comforted.

From that day till her death she continued to deplore the loss of her dumb companions, and to denounce the authors of the outrage as monsters of cruelty. But no power on earth could destroy Betty's love for cats, and though she never again contrived to gather such a numerous company of "mewers" under her roof, she never wanted a cat as long as she lived.



## JAMIE STEVEN, KING OF MONTROSE BEGGARS.

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IT is sad to think into what depths of misery human nature can sink, and yet apparently be happy in the midst of degradation. We see how savage man enjoys an animal existence, and lives in conditions which make his civilized brethren shudder to contemplate. There is no question but what there is a certain kind of happiness experienced by the savage in his native wilds, but it is a happiness which only those who have been inured to such a life can enjoy. There have been some philosophers who, wearied of the pleasures of civilized society, have gone into rhapsodies about the happiness of savage life, and, in a fit of romantic enthusiasm, have eschewed civilization for a time to revel in the sweets of savage freedom. But such philosophers have found that the ideal of happiness which they had set up was too visionary to be realized. The charms which they saw in savage life vanished as they approached the reality; like the desert mirage, the glowing picture which their fancies had conjured up gave place to a barren waste of sand. The happiness which the savage enjoys springs from his ignorance. In his case ignorance is bliss; but to those who know a better way the degradation of savage life is misery beyond endurance.

Yet in the midst of civilized society men have sunk, and are often sinking, into a state of savage barbarity. Many of these are the authors of their own miseries, and though sunk to the lowest depths of social degra-

dation, they have it in their power to raise themselves from their vile condition. Such wretches, with the knowledge of the comforts of society, and galled by the sight of others enjoying these comforts which they are deprived of, must feel a degree of torture almost inconceivable. We may pity them, but still we must admit that they are justly suffering for their own reckless conduct. But there are some poor forlorn creatures who claim our pity, who have sunk from a state of comfort to almost savage primitiveness through calamities, mental and physical, over which they had little or no control. That in the midst of a civilised community a human being could be allowed to sink into a state of barbarism and live a forlorn and an aimless life, and yet be happy in his misery, is somewhat surprising. Yet there are numerous instances where poor imbeciles have lived for years in solitude, clothed in rags and reeking with filth, without any one caring aught for their existence save to laugh at their oddities and whims.

Such a character was Jamie Steven, who vegetated in Montrose in the beginning of the present century. Jamie will yet be remembered by many Montrosians for his queer costume and strange habits. His personal appearance would have suggested the idea to the mind of a stranger that he was a poor suffering invalid, afflicted by some incurable disease about the head. But there was nothing wrong with the outside of Jamie's cranium, although the interior of the "citadel of reason" was sadly out of order. Jamie was afflicted with an incurable infirmity, but the disease was of the mind not of the body.

Let us attempt a pen and ink sketch of this strange human oddity. On his head he wore a tall hat, which had once been a goodly beaver, but long usage had worn it bare and brown, and holes which here and there had yawned their gaping mouths were care-

fully darned with white thrums or coloured worsted threads, as had been readiest at hand when the damage was observed. His head and chin were wrapped in dirty flannel bandages, made up of small pieces of flannel, carefully pinned or sewed together, till the whole formed a good long broad strap, which was tightly wrapped over his ears and under his chin, and almost hid his face from the weather and the scrutiny of too curious observers. His coat, of the orthodox swallow-tailed cut, had probably once been of "gude blue cloth," but was so patched and clouted that the original fabric was lost in the parti-coloured patch-work. Patches of every size, colour, and shape had at various periods been added to the garment, till the whole formed a queer piece of mosaic rag work, of as many colours, and perhaps more, than Joseph wore in the days of old. Add to this a pair of scant breeks, reaching to the knee, from whence his nether limbs were wrapped round with thick pieces of cloth, which served the double purpose of gaiters and hose. His shoon, too, were a remarkable part of his attire. Clumsy and rough at best, they had in the course of years been rendered ruder still by endless patches piled above each other. If his "duds" and "brogues" kept out the cold and wet he cared not how he violated fashion's rigid laws. Personal comfort was all that Jamie studied in his dress. He, happy man, was above all men independent of that capricious and unreasonable social despot.

It would be readily supposed from the warm wraps about his head that he was a daily martyr to "rheums i' the head" or the "hell o' a' diseases," as Burns in an agony of wrath baptised the toothache. But Jamie was no sufferer either from these troubles or any other physical cause. He simply wore his flannel bandage to protect his face from the frost in winter and the heat in summer. He detested cold and

equally dreaded heat ; but whether the flannel kept out the one as well as the other is a very doubtful matter to decide. To shield his person from the elements was the only thing that stimulated Jamie's industry, for it was his own unaided fingers that clouted both his hat and shoes, and ornamented his coat with many a fantastic patch.

Jamie Steven, then, was a mental imbecile. He gained, or rather he depended for his daily bread on the charitably disposed, and these were neither few nor far between in those days. At the time we speak of him he was well stricken in years, and the weight of age and its accompanying infirmities had cramped and stiffened his limbs. But Jamie was once a sturdy carle, and before his mind gave way he was a proper comely man.

But the poor fellow was a mental wreck, a social waif, drifting on the ocean of life without a chart or rudder. It is one of the saddest spectacles to see a human being bereft of that most precious of gifts, reason ; but sadder still to behold the semi-idiocy of one who once was endowed with that God-given faculty, without hope of its ever being restored in this life. Such a spectacle was poor Jamie Steven. Of course, no such calamity befalls any one without some primary cause, and it was even so with Jamie. Hopeless and despised love has perhaps wrecked more lives than any other human calamity ; and yet some minds are cynical enough to sneer at such disasters, and characterise those unfortunates as weak-minded men. It may be so ; a mind that gives way from any pressure must be weak in some of its constituent parts. All have their weak points, and if we have been enabled to rise above great calamities, we have only the more cause for thankfulness that we have been granted strength to bear up when the waters of affliction surged around our souls.

Love, then, was the cause of Jamie's mental affliction, and his sorrow seemed to be ever present with him through his clouded existence. One peculiar trait in Jamie was a *penchant* for singing extemporaneous rhymes. For a penny he would compose a song on the spot and sing it to a doleful air, for the amusement of the bystanders. The burden of Jamie's songs was Betty Ireland, the faithless fair one who stole the poor fellow's heart, and his reason along with it.

Jamie's extempore songs were most relished, but he could perform feats in the vocal line which would tax the lungs of most professors of song. One of his favourite ditties was Tullochgorum, which he could rant from beginning to end without seeming to stop for breath. The idea of pausing at the end of a line, or even at the end of a verse, never once struck Jamie as being at all necessary to give effect either to the music or the sentiment. The whole performance was an uninterrupted rant from beginning to end, in the same high-pitched key. Jamie attended the Auld Kirk regularly, and he joined with might and main in the service of praise. There was no mincing the matter with Jamie; he was not afraid to lift up his voice in the service of the sanctuary. So lustily did he sing in the congregation, and in such discordant shrieks, that he often *non-plussed* the worthy precentor. Once started to sing, or rather to bawl, Jamie went on without regard to the voice of the leader. Between the pauses at the end of a bar, or the termination of a stanza, Jamie's sonorous tones were distinctly heard over the whole church, and he never paused till the minister rose to offer up prayer, or announce his text.

The habits of this poor creature were a strange compound of idleness and carefulness, as regarded his own existence. He also voluntarily set himself to

perform a certain public service to the community. Bowick, in his poetical sketches, thus describes him :—

Sometimes he walks a little up and down  
Upon the pavement on a summer day,  
And oft his hands in bosom doth he lay,  
And oft he scratcheth, yea, and fidgeth too,  
But for what reason I decline to say,  
Because it were not seemly that you knew,  
Mayhap, poor Jamie hath no better thing to do.

But Jamie occasionally found something better to do in his promenades than such unseemly motions as the poet describes. If a shutter should by chance have been left swinging on its hinges to the danger of the passengers, Jamie felt it his duty to fasten it back carefully. If he chanced to observe the common strand choked by any accumulation of mud or miniature dam, which some juvenile artist had industriously reared, the careful body would patiently clear it away with his stick, and allow the stagnant pool to find its proper receptacle in the common sewer. Thus in a humble way, Jamie rendered valuable service to the community, and took as much pride in his public labours, and no doubt felt as much gratification in the performance of them, as the highest civic functionary did in the discharge of his honourable duties.

The fastening back of refractory shutters and reddin' the gutters were not the only tasks he imposed upon himself. He devoted a portion of his energies and spare time to the service of the Kirk, as well as to the town. Every Sabbath morning, Jamie made his appearance in the belfry just as the bells began to be rung. To assist the bellringing was not his object in visiting the Steeple, though he loved to hear the clang and clamour of their iron tongues where the din was greatest, but pulling the ropes required too much physical exertion to suit Jamie's inclination. Nevertheless he had a duty to perform, and that he most

faithfully fulfilled. When the "jowing" began, Jamie stationed himself in the Gothic window to watch the minister's arrival. The worthy pastor must have been as punctual as the clock, for when Jamie caught a glimpse of his reverence approaching the church he gave the bellman the signal to stop. Regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, and year after year, the simpleton stuck to his post in the Steeple window, fancying, no doubt, that his presence there was an indispensable necessity. As for the utility of such a labour of love, there can be little question. But it was the way in which poor Jamie sought to render himself useful—and, however absurd it may seem, it was in his estimation a service that could not be dispensed with.

This strange eccentric being was at one time a tradesman, with good abilities, with as fair prospects in life as other people. But in consequence of a disappointment in love he sank into listless apathetic habits, and latterly withdrew himself from all society, took up his residence in a dingy hole, and began to beg his bread from door to door. It was remarked that Jamie never thanked any one for a donation, but just took it as a matter of course. And yet, with all his ingratitude, Jamie was always well served when he went a-begging. His wallet was always well filled with choice crumbs from the rich man's table, and on Sabbath Jamie dined sumptuously three times—that is, he had a feast of broken meat, cold fowl, and other delicacies for breakfast, dinner, and supper.

But while Jamie was successful himself he was not unmindful of his frail brethren of the "pock and string." "A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind," and Jamie had a strong sympathy for his beggar friends less fortunate than himself. This feeling he showed in a thoroughly practical way. Every

Saturday Jamie marshalled the begging fraternity, and putting himself at their head, he led his tattered, ragged regiment over the town on a foraging expedition. Jamie was the leader of this ragged band, and a picturesque sight it was to see him marching in consequential dignity, followed by about a score of old men and women, clothed in rags and limping on crutches from door to door, and street to street. Not only did he lead the beggars, but he also acted as spokesman, and begged for the general good. On these occasions whatever he received from the charitable—and Jamie knew by experience where to apply—he divided equally amongst the poor creatures, who trusted implicitly in his honesty and fairness.

In those days, before Parochial Boards were called into existence, beggars used to go in bands from house to house, probably acting on the axiom that unity is strength. Jamie Steven was the acknowledged king of the mendicants in Montrose, a post which he maintained with dignity and managed with success. Times are altered now, and if Jamie had flourished in these degenerate days he would have been accommodated with lodgings in a large, airy mansion, specially erected for the residence of such poverty-stricken creatures as he used to lead and guide. He was a sturdy beggar, and though his bandaged face made him look like an invalid, he enjoyed lusty health, and died at the ripe age of seventy-two. After his death it was found that he had laid aside a sovereign to pay his funeral expenses, and in the corner of the wretched den where he lived for so many years a bag was discovered containing twenty-five shillings in copper money.

## JAMIE COOPER,

A MONTROSE "CHAPPIN' LADDIE."

**A**MONG the many queer characters who flourished in the quiet town of Montrose rather more than a quarter of a century ago, perhaps none afforded so much amusement to the youngsters as the subject of the following sketch. Jamie Cooper, better known by the popular nickname of "Cappie," was both mentally and physically about as odd a specimen of humanity as it is possible to conceive. Unlike Willie Pert, he was a hard working body, always busy and anxious to perform to the best of his abilities the duties entrusted to him. But even this praiseworthy feature in the poor fellow's character was taken advantage of by the sport-loving youngsters. Jamie had a great idea of his own importance. He could not bear to be ridiculed, and when the audacious rascals dared to insult his dignity, he retaliated by threatening them with the vengeance of the law, and such denunciations formed the main elements of the fun he afforded the young scamps.

When we first remember him, between twenty and thirty years ago, he might then have been about forty years of age. He was a thin little body, with a small, sharp, pale face, and a rather long nose. His brow was very low and narrow, and his black hair, always cut short, surrounded his head in a circle like a cap, and almost concealed the trifle of fore-

head entirely. On week days he wore a long-tailed blue coat, with shining metal buttons, and a pair of white cord trousers, which were "a world too wide for his shrunk shanks." In this guise, during the meal hours, Jamie strutted, with his hands behind his back, to and from the mill where he was employed, with an air of self-importance, and at the same time keeping a sharp look out on every side for the "ill-mannered loons" that had the audacity to insult his dignity. As he moved along the streets, the urchins, bent on mischief, would flee his presence and ensconce themselves in a close mouth, while Jamie's watchful eye would follow their retreating forms with significant vigilance, and his warning voice reminding them that he was up to their tricks.

"I see you, sir ; I'm aware of you ; I know you, yes, I know you ; you won't escape me, remember that, sir." Thus Jamie, as it were, challenged the youngsters to meddle with him, and the challenge was rarely declined.

They would suffer him quietly to pass, apparently afraid of his puny threats, but when once past a vigorous cough from the close brought Jamie up all standing, and in righteous indignation he would wheel round, and exclaim, "I'll mark you, sir, I'll go to the authorities about you, sir. I'll take you before your betters, sir."

This was the signal for a general attack. From before and behind Jamie's ears would be assailed with such opprobrious epithets as "Picklie tow, Jamie," "A bawbee thirdie, Jamie," and some one more audacious than the rest would offend his ears by pronouncing the wrath inspiring nickname of "Cappie." This was the "unkindest cut of all." Poor Jamie's wrath knew no bounds. He denounced the ribald rascals in lofty and magniloquent language, which served only to render him more ridiculous. Goaded

at last to frenzy by the fast increasing mob, the poor fellow in the impotence of his rage would give chase to the rascals, who fled like chaff driven by the wind before him.

On one occasion he darted after a very small urchin, who was innocent of the crime he was to seize him for. The boy fled, screaming in terror, closely pursued by Jamie. The lad ran for refuge to a shop, and to secure his safety he shut the door behind him. But his pursuer was so close on his heels that before the door could be shut Jamie was already half over the threshold. Desperate with fright the boy forced back the door and jammed poor Jamie fast against the doorpost and held him there. He yelled with pain, and implored the boy to release him, but the lad was so terrified at the proximity of his pursuer that he continued to scream with fright and crushed the door with all his strength on poor Jamie. In this position they remained, each afraid of the other, till the shopkeeper, who was much amused with the scene, came and released both of them from the fix. It was a drawn battle between them, but poor Jamie got the worst of it, and ever after that he was afraid of the urchin who gave him such an unmerciful squeezing.

Jamie was regularly employed at one of the spinning mills in the town. Mentally and physically the poor fellow was incapable of performing any other than such light employment as children are generally engaged in. He had never been employed anywhere else, and the proprietors retained him more by way of charity than from any use they had for his services. His duties were to pick waste threads off the bobbins and any other light trifling job. But Jamie had a lofty idea of his own importance, and he styled his trade by the high-sounding name of a "picker." Jamie used also to rise very early in the mornings to awaken

the factory hands and by this means he earned a few extra pence weekly. While going his rounds one dark morning a master of a ship which had just entered the port met Jamie in a dark lane. Both were somewhat afraid of each other. The seaman was a stranger, and could not conceive what sort of being Jamie was. He stopped, and surveyed him for a minute by the flickering light of a lantern the simpleton carried, and then accosted him with—

“Pray, sir, what are you?”

“And pray, sir, what are you?” retorted Jamie.

“Why, I’m a skipper,” replied the salt.

“And I’m a picker,” replied Jamie with great dignity, and then passed on, leaving the stranger just about as wise as he was at first.

Jamie’s zeal in the discharge of his onerous duties might serve as an example to many a slothful servant. Jamie was no mere time servant, like too many nowadays, whose sole object seems to be how to kill time and get the wages which they scarcely deserve. It was all the same to honest Jamie, whether in presence of his foreman or behind his back his diligence was unremitting. When going his rounds in the mornings, poor Jamie felt how great a responsibility rested on him, and he strove, with a singleness of purpose, to discharge his trust to the satisfaction of his patrons. At the time Jamie held the office of “chapper” in Montrose the Ten Hours’ Factory Act had not come into operation. Then the mill hands had to begin work at five in the morning, and in some cases, when cleaning the machinery or extra work had to be done, they often had to be in the mill an hour, and sometimes two hours earlier. The duty of arousing the poor millworkers at these early hours devolved on Jamie, which he endeavoured with the utmost fidelity to discharge.

It was no uncommon thing for Jamie to start on his

rounds between three and four o'clock in the morning, and begin to arouse the whole of his customers indiscriminately, whether they wanted to be roused from their slumbers so early or not. It was all the same to Jamie; when he was out he visited the domiciles of every one on his round, however ill-timed his visit might be. You may be sure the poor fellow got little thanks for his attentions in those cases where he called perhaps a couple of hours too early. Often his thundering raps on the door or the window shutter were treated with silent contempt. But Jamie would not leave the door without an answer to his call, but continued to thunder at intervals, accompanying his vigorous raps with some such warnings as the following :—

“ Arise ! arise ! are you awake ”—another rap louder than before—“ do you hear me call ? arise ! awake ! ”—another pause and still no answer. Jamie gets frantic, and thunders louder and louder. “ Now, I have done my duty, if you sleep in you have yourself to blame. I wash my hands from all blame. I clear myself of the responsibility. Now, you are warned, you can stand to the consequences.”

Having delivered himself of this burst of eloquence, he leaves the door in high dudgeon and his customers to the enjoyment of their sweet repose. But if the drowsy inmates think they have got rid of their faithful monitor, they are sadly mistaken. They scarcely get time to turn in bed, and compose for another quiet nap, when their ears are again assailed by Jamie's provoking rat, tat, tat.

Jamie's conscience would not be satisfied, so long as the least doubt rested on his mind that he had not strictly fulfilled his task. He felt indignant at the slothful habits of those he was trying to arouse to a sense of their duty, but in his mind a suspicion remained that perhaps he was at fault himself. Back he

comes then, after he had gone only a few yards, and assails the door with renewed vigour till his tormentors are fain to reply for the sake of their own comfort. Such scenes often occurred in the course of Jamie's rounds, some of his patrons taking a particular delight in teasing the poor fellow, and putting his fidelity to the test.

It will thus be seen that Jamie was a praiseworthy, industrious, honest creature, who strove to the utmost of his abilities to discharge his humble duties, not merely for the sake of the reward, but from a conscientious desire to be diligent and faithful. Jamie's reward in a pecuniary sense, was poor enough. The whole of his combined earnings would now-a-days be scorned, and rejected by the veriest stripling that enters our factories. But Jamie was content, and would have been supremely happy if the mischievous urchins would have allowed him to live in peace. But such is the lot of man. It matters not in whatever station our lot may be cast, trials will come to mar our happiness. It was true that Jamie to a certain extent brought his miseries on himself. If he had been wise enough to see that his own conduct tempted the boys to tease him he might have escaped their annoyance altogether. But before we blame Jamie and other simpletons for allowing themselves to be persecuted for the wanton sport of others, we ought first to examine into the sources of our own troubles, and see how far we have brought them on our heads by our own folly.

Small as his earnings were, they were sufficient for all his simple wants. Jamie managed to support himself by his own industry, weak-minded though he was, and scorned the idea of being the subject of any charitable institution. Of course he lived in the poorest of homes and fared on the coarsest of fare.

"The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food,"

constituted the staple of Jamie's sustenance. This fact was patent to all beholders after he had breakfasted and dined, by the droppings of the pottage which adhered to his garments, and which he was so unconscious of as to appear in the streets besmeared with. Temperate and frugal in his habits, he nevertheless indulged himself a little on pay nights. After he had gone round and collected his hard-earned pennies for his morning labours, it was his custom to adjourn to a certain provision shop and enjoy himself after his own fashion. Jamie's treat consisted of a pound of cheese and a coarse "bap," both of which he got well smeared with treacle by way of discount, and then seated on the top of a barrel, he attacked the rare delicacies with great gusto, to the amusement of the shopkeeper and his customers. Ever and anon, as Jamie proceeded with his feast, the shopkeeper would kindly inquire if he would have a little more of the condiment, when, Jamie, nothing loth, would complacently remark, "Well, it'll be none the worse of a little more," at the same time offering his cheese for another smear. The poor simpleton's tastes may seem disgusting to sensitive palates, but such was his mode of enjoying himself. In reality, his weekly "blow-out" was far less offensive and debasing than many a sottish beer swiller, who gulps down his throat half a gallon or so of a very questionable decoction of malt and other ingredients, and are thereby styled by themselves and their pothouse friends "jolly good fellows."

During the great excitement caused by the Disruption in the Kirk of Scotland in 1843, when party spirit was running high over the length and breadth of the land, it was no unusual thing for men in those times to carry their rancour so far as to vent their spleen on those dependent on them, if they dared to differ from them in their opinions of the two great

ecclesiastical parties of the day. Jamie was not unobservant of a good deal of this spirit going on around him, and he wisely resolved to keep himself out of the scrape as far as possible. He was once asked what he thought of the Moderates and the Nons, and to which of the sides he belonged. "Well," he replied, after reflecting a little, "I'm with none of them."

The interrogator, pretending to misunderstand Jamie's answer, replied in astonishment, "Bless me, Jamie, I never thocht ye wis a Non, be ony body."

"You don't understand me!" shrieked Jamie, almost frantic lest he should be identified with either party. "I tell you I'm with none of them."

"O, yes, Jamie, I understand what you mean, ye're a Non; but ye needna think shame o' that," rejoined the mischievous wag, giving poor Jamie a peculiar nod, and leaving him in a state of great excitement, protesting with great vehemence that he was "with none of them."

Poor Jamie was doubtless in blissful ignorance of the bone of contention between the two great ecclesiastical factions; but if so, he was not singular in this respect. Yet he had sufficient cunning to avoid giving offence to either party by declaring his neutrality, though his adhesion was of small value to either side. In Montrose the Free Church party were less numerous than in other towns of similar size, owing to the fact that the parish ministers, Drs Paterson and Smith, did not come out. The consequence of this was that the majority of their large congregation remained in the Establishment. A swarm of real staunch—and considering their circumstances—thorough-going "Non-intrusionists" left the Parish Church and formed themselves into a congregation. This, with St John's *quoad sacra* Church, whose able pastor, Mr Nixon, took a leading part in

the movement, and left the Establishment and his entire congregation along with him, constituted the whole Free Church body in Montrose at the Disruption.

The "Nons" were therefore in the minority, and Jamie wisely kept aloof from them altogether. He was "with none of them," but he never forsook his place in the Parish Church after the memorable event.

Jamie's presence in the church was to the younger portion of the congregation a greater object of attraction than the ministers. His grotesque figure and serio-comic appearance was so mirth-provoking that even the gravest of the worshippers could scarcely repress their risible faculties at the simple-minded body. His usual seat was in the corner of one of the galleries, and in such a position that his presence there could not escape the preacher's eye. His small black head was almost buried in the high greasy collar of an antiquated rusty black coat. His hair hanging straight down in a line on his brow on level with his eyebrows, from which he peered round him furtively with his small black eyes, as if he were on the watch for the "misleard loons," and challenging them to meddle with him in such a sacred presence.

During the ordinary die's of worship the poor fellow generally escaped scot free ; but at the evening services, which he never failed to attend, the "roughs" teased him to such a degree that the preacher more than once had to stop in the middle of the discourse and call the ribald rioters to order. On one occasion when the pastor was preaching a special sermon to seamen, Jamie's conduct was little short of bringing down the house with laughter. The large church was crammed to overflowing, a large proportion of the audience being seamen and their wives and sweet-hearts. The gallery, which belonged to the Seamen Fraternity was crowded with young tars, bent more

on having a lark than listening to the counsel and spiritual advice of the preacher, who took almost a fatherly interest in their welfare. In the back pew of this same gallery "Cappie Cooper" had ensconced himself, and the young tars continued to amuse themselves with peppering poor Jamie with volleys of grey peas, which kept Jamie pretty actively employed in scowling to the rascals, shaking his head and threatening unutterable things.

This bye-play was just the usual pantomimic diversion which went on during the evening sermon. But this was a special sermon, and at the close there was to be a collection for some special purpose, which was to be lifted with the ladles—an obsolete and antiquated custom. In the course of the sermon Jamie took his bawbee from his pouch and began twirling it on the book-board in childish idleness. A mischievous urchin sitting next him chucked the bawbee off the board to the floor. Away went the copper rolling through to the next pew. Jamie determined not to lose his precious bawbee, clambered over the seat in front to recover his lost treasure. The young roughs made way for him, but just as he was on the point of securing the spoil, some imp gave the copper a kick, and away it rolled from Cappie's grasp. Over the pew Jamie again scrambled, nothing daunted.

Imagine the scene which followed Jamie's escapade. The whole church got into a state of excitement at the spectacle of the little droll-looking half-wit scrambling over the pews, and disappearing in the bottom for an instant, and then being helped up again. The roughs were having their lark in earnest, for whenever the stupid creature stooped to pick up the lost coin, some wag sent it rolling farther on, and on his headlong hunt Jamie went till he reached the front seat, where he recovered his bawbee.

The tumult was so great that the minister stopped, and looking daggers at the bold desecrators, demanded the reason for all this interruption, when a voice replied, half choking with laughter, "Cappie Cooper's lost his bawbee."

The minister, after administering a rebuke to the thoughtless crew, restored comparative quiet, and then proceeded with the rest of his sermon. The worthy pastor sincerely pitied poor Jamie, and determined to secure him from further annoyance. He invited Jamie to take possession of his own pew at the evening service in future. But this measure did not mend matters in the least. Jamie took possession of the minister's pew the following Sabbath. But here he was in a more conspicuous position than before, and there he sat, casting defiant glances on his tormentors in the gallery. The appearance of Jamie in the minister's seat sent a general titter round the congregation, and from the gallery he was peppered with a rattling fire of grey peas, that made him duck his head, and perform the most ludicrous grimaces. Poor Jamie, like Noah's dove, could find no rest for the sole of his foot, neither in the gallery nor in the minister's pew.

Many more ludicrous traits might be told of poor Jamie, but this must suffice. It may be asked where is the profit in delineating such an insignificant character. What purpose can it serve to drag his oddities before the public? To this we reply there is much good every way, but chiefly because it shows that the weaknesses he displayed, and which served as sport for the unthinking, were only a reflex of the follies and weaknesses which characterise human nature generally. There are few men who are not keenly sensitive to ridicule, only, unlike Jamie, prudence and self-respect prevent them from rendering themselves ridiculous by openly resenting it. But

they are poor-spirited individuals indeed if they do not resent such affronts in some way or other. But while we smile at Jamie's weakness there are traits in his character well worthy of imitation. He was no sluggard or beggarly sycophant, but faithfully and assiduously performed his humble duties and supported himself independently by his own exertions, and to many a slothful eye servant we would say "go and do likewise."

## BAREFOOTED TAM, THE DRUMMER OF KIRRIEMUIR.

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**I**N the management of their Police establishment the good folks of Kirriemuir have set a striking example to the other towns in the county. That "Kirrie" is a well behaved and law-abiding community is abundantly evident from the fact that a single policeman is capable of protecting life and property, and keeping rogues in order in a town containing a population of six thousand inhabitants. Strange as this may appear it is a fact nevertheless. Perhaps there is not another town in Scotland of equal size that can boast of such a compact and well organized police force, where all the offices of Superintendent, Fiscal, Sanitary Inspector, Sergeant, and Constable are centralised in the person of one single individual. Happy little community, the envy of "surrounding nations." Long may your children romp about your roods and vennels, "blythe as lambkins on the lea," dreading only the "ghost of a bobby" pacing his lonely rounds now and then to frighten them at their sport.

But Kirriemuir has long been accustomed to this sort of thing. In the days when she was only a burgh of barony before the Police Act came into force, the majesty of the law was upheld by a solitary official dubbed a Town's officer. In the beginning of the present century that office was held for many years

by a worthy named Tam Barnett. Personally, Tam was about as undignified looking a functionary as could well be met with. He was a short, squat little man, and about as broad as he was long. His broad, good humoured face was tanned by the weather, and ornamented with "many a cornelian and cairngorm pimple." His uniform was fantastic enough, but it lacked the striking brilliancy of colour so conspicuous in the uniforms of civic guards of more pretentious burghs. A broad blue bonnet, a coarse blue cloth jacket and vest, a "harn" apron, and velveteen breeks reaching a little below the knee, completed Tam's outfit. He wore neither shoes nor stockings, and summer and winter he "skelped" barefooted through mud and snow in the discharge of his public duties with the jail key dangling in his hand.

Like his modern successors Tam held a plurality of offices. In addition to the duties of a police constable he acted as town's drummer, prison governor, and general dispenser of summary justice on rogues and vagabonds. In those times the drummer or bellman was the only available advertising medium open to the public in small towns. Rouns and various other things requiring publicity were cried by "tuck of drum" throughout the streets of the town. The functionary who performed this public duty required to have a good voice as well as the capacity to read written or printed notices which might be put into his hands. The first of these qualities was possessed by Tam Barnett in an eminent degree. His lungs were made of leather, and he could bawl so loud and distinct that it was said he could be heard as far as Ballenshoe when crying in the streets of "Kirrie." But, strange to say, Tam could neither read nor write. When he was entrusted with an advertisement it had to be repeated to him several times till he committed it to memory. But once his

lesson thoroughly learned he rarely made a mistake. He has been known to cry ten or twelve different announcements in succession at the kirk door on a Sunday without committing a single blunder. Crying "roups" and other secular advertisements at the kirk door was quite common in the rural parishes in Scotland in olden times. It seems strange that in a country where the Sabbath was observed with so much strictness and solemnity that such an open desecration of the day of rest should have been permitted at the very doors of the sanctuary. Yet such is the inconsistency of human nature in matters of religion that men often "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

But Tam's memory was not always in proper tune. When he chanced to have "a drappie in his e'e," or was tormented by the laddies, he sometimes lost the thread of his discourse, though he never entirely forgot the text. On one occasion he was perambulating the town crying a roup of household furniture, but it soon became evident from his unsteady gait and guttural speech that Tam was far gone. He had a long list of articles to enumerate, but as he proceeded on his round item after item dropped from his memory till his bill of fare was abridged to the following concise terms:—"Notice—A roup of household furniture, consisting of tables, chairs, poker, an' tangs, and a lot o' ither things—hie—I canna mind the name o'—hie—but you'll see them whan you come." Possibly Tam's wits had been scattered by the laddies, who used to criticise his "drum solos" in the most cutting and derisive manner. Tam's performances on the calfskin were more remarkable for vigour of execution than musical taste. He thumped the drum head unmercifully, but the sounds produced had neither time nor tune. The laddies, however, interpreted them after their own ideas into "dirt upon dirt, dirt, dirt, dirt." When they dared to shout these offensive

words Tam lost his temper and chased the rascals, crying that he "kent their lucky mammies drank tea," which in his day was considered a more shameful indulgence than whisky drinking, which Tam loved only too well.

Tam's drum was useful in more ways than crying "public roups." When information reached him of a robbery having been committed within the bounds of the burgh, instead of proceeding to make inquiries on the quiet, as is the manner of professional detectives, Tam adopted the very opposite course, and spread the matter as broad and wide as he possibly could. After ascertaining all the particulars he sallied forth with his drum, and cried it all over the town, warning the thieves that he knew them, and could if he chose lay his hand on their shoulder at any moment, but in mercy he forbore just then in the hope that they would think shame o' themsels', and bring back the things to the fouk that aught them. In many cases Tam's ruse often proved successful in recovering the stolen property, though in these instances the thieves escaped unpunished.

In preserving the peace Tam's post was anything but a sinecure. In those days the country was infested with bands of cairds, tinkers, and showmen, who were a great annoyance to the peaceful inhabitants. When a gang of these nomads honoured the town with a visit they generally got on the spree, and finished up their debauch by a free fight amongst themselves. Tam was a brave, fearless, little man. Single-handed he would boldly attack these bands of lawless gangrels, and if he failed to drive them out of the town he would fight the biggest man they had, beat him soundly, and then make him prisoner, and shut him up in the jail. Thus, with his own doughty arm, he would capture the greater part of the unruly crew, and consign them to the tolbooth, where he

kept them under lock and key all night, and liberated them next morning with strict injunctions to leave the town directly. Tam's "black hole" generally cooled their courage, and made them only too glad to decamp quietly after a night's confinement.

On one occasion Tam had a desperate encounter with a company of travelling showmen, when he would not have come off so victorious had timely assistance not been forthcoming. Tam was always glad when a company of strolling players or peripatetic mountebanks paid the town a visit. Being the only public official with whom they had to deal, Tam and the showmen fraternised very agreeably together. The Town Hall was then almost the only place where public entertainments could be given. As the letting of the hall was one of Tam's perquisites he was often not very discriminating as to the character of the tenants he secured. In addition to his fees for attendance he generally got the performances to announce through the town and other odd jobs, for all of which he was well paid, and plied with unlimited libations of whisky by the show folk.

On this particular occasion the company, either destitute of musical instruments or musical talent, found it necessary to enlist the services of Tam and Robbie Dickson, the town's piper. The two functionaries having been regaled with a dram, to procure which the "manager" spent his last sixpence, they stationed themselves on the flight of steps leading to the Town Hall, and began the musical performance. The worthies exerted themselves with praiseworthy vigour. Rabbie—

"Screw'd his pipes and gart them skirl,  
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl,"

and Tam thumped with his stick on the drumhead with reckless regard to time or tune. But all their

efforts were in vain—the piping and drumming would not draw a house. The proprietor and manager shouted in his loudest key “walk up ladies and gentlemen and see the best exhibition now travelling ; this is the only opportunity the public of this town will have to witness such an interesting and instructive entertainment, and the price of admission is only a penny.”

Whether it was that the “Kirrie” folks had got above such silly things as puppet shows, or whether times were hard and money scarce with the “puir weavers” it is not easy to decide ; at all events no one was gracious enough to patronise the entertainment. The showmen looked glum, and well they might for they were depending on the night’s drawings to provide them with supper and lodgings. The desperate state of affairs too began to dawn on the minds of Tam and Rabbie, and they naturally concluded that there was but small chance of their services being paid for. After a short consultation the worthies resolved that they would have their money or a material guarantee that payment would be forthcoming. With Rabbie at his back Tam boldly marched inside and confronted the proprietor. In a few minutes Rabbie was bundled down the stone steps head foremost, his pipes emitting an unearthly wail as he rolled above the bags and squeezed out their last breath of wind. With rueful countenance Rabbie gathered himself up and grasping his pipes under his arm ran home as fast as his feet could carry him crying lugubriously, “Loosh but they’re wild men thae show folk, an’ they’re no ‘greein’ amon’ themsels’.”

But Tam was not so easily conquered. He fought like a lion, and sent his antagonists sprawling on the floor like nine pins. A wild uproar ensued, the showmen fought bravely, and Tam was getting well mauled when some special constables came to his assistance,

and the whole company were made prisoners and lodged in jail.

Next morning Tam with his usual generosity liberated the "poor players" on their word of honour that they would leave the town forthwith and never come back again.

Tam had many excellent traits in his character, and it might in truth be said of him that "his failings leaned to virtue's side." He was honest, generous, and courageous, and above all he was very fond of children, and though they often tormented him about his drum he was never happier than when he saw them enjoying themselves. In this respect his character stands out in striking contrast to many over-officious policemen of modern times, who appear to take delight in frightening children whenever they see them romping in childish playfulness on the streets. Tam was regarded by the school children as one of their best friends. If there was any public amusement going on, such as Ord's equestrian performance, a Free Gardeners' procession, or a Hill market, and the stern "dominies" would not give their scholars a holiday to enjoy the fun, Tam at once took the matter in hand and waited on the various schoolmasters, and tormented them until they were glad to yield the point and give the scholars a holiday. Whenever Tam's quaint figure appeared at the school door on such occasions the scholars burst forth with exultant shouts, "Here's Tam Barnett, we'll get the play noo."

On one occasion Tam was ordered to announce by tuck of drum amongst the tents at a Hill market that all persons trespassing in the woods and den of Logie would be "prosecuted to the utmost vigour of the law." The boys gathered round Tam and loudly vented their dissatisfaction at this unwonted prohibition of what they considered one of their local

privileges. "Gae wa', billies, dinna be fear'd ; it's only some haver that the grieve's got in his heed," said Tam consolingly.

Latterly, however, Tam became so much addicted to drink that he neglected his duties, and his quarrelsome disposition led him so often into brawls and street fights that the respectable portion of the community became utterly disgusted with his conduct. He was often remonstrated with, and as often he made promises of amendment, but these promises were never fulfilled. As years rolled on Tam grew worse, and at last, seeing that it was hopeless to expect him to reform he was stripped of his authority and laid on the shelf. Deprived of his situation in his old age he gradually sunk into abject poverty. After struggling on for a few years, trying to earn a crust at the "pirn wheel," a poorly paid industry at best, and one that he had been little used to, he died at last in a wretched hovel, neglected and forgotten by his fellow townsmen.

## DEACON ELSHENDER, AN ARBROATH MUNCHAUSEN.

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**N**EARLY half a century has passed away since the subject of this sketch was gathered to his fathers, and his mortal clay was laid to rest in the Auld Kirk-yard of Arbroath under the shadow of the hoary pile of the Abbey ruins, over which he kept watch and ward for many years. A new generation has sprung up since then who knew not the Deacon in the flesh, but though few of his old cronies are now "to the fore" the Deacon's name and fame are still green in the memory of his townsmen. Who is there who was born or lived within sight of "Auld St Tamas" who has not heard of the famous Deacon Elshender? His wondrous adventures, and "hair breadth 'scares" in flood and field, his matchless feats of strength, his natural gifts, and his far-famed travels have been recounted many a time and oft around the winter fires, or in the busy workshops of Arbroath, and in lands beyond the sea wherever the sons of St Thomas have set their foot.

But the Deacon's memory has not been left to be handed down from father to son by oral tradition alone. The wonderful story of his life has been enshrined in immortal rhyme—an epic (?) in two cantos was published by Sim Sands, a well known Arbroath wit, which recounted the Deacon's deeds in a graphic style. But alas it sometimes does happen that the

efforts of "genius" are often lost to posterity, and we are afraid that Sim Sands' metrical Deacon Elshender is also in danger of perishing. Few copies of the book are now to be met with, but as it is sometimes sought after we have at the request of several friends resolved to append it to this collection of character sketches. We have the more readily agreed to accede to this request, as the Deacon was himself one of the most extraordinary characters of his time, and this series could not have been considered complete had the Deacon been omitted.

James Alexander, or as he was more commonly known by his local cognomen of "Deacon Elshender," was in his day and generation one of the most popular men in his native town. James was by trade a blacksmith, and having been elected to the honourable position of Deacon of the Hammerman Incorporation, the title once conferred on him was prefixed to his name for the remainder of his life.

James then was a "smith," as his father, honest man, was before his day. A common practice in olden times was to transmit certain trades and professions down through certain families for successive generations. Our hero's father was a blacksmith, and perhaps his father's fathers back through the family line to Tubal Cain himself for aught we know. At any rate James' father was no ordinary smith, if we can credit some of the reminiscences of his skill related by his gifted son. One hairst nicht the Deacon, when a youth, in a fit of wantonness, fired a red hot iron rod at the full moon, and the glowing shaft, true to its mark, pierced the Queen of Night clean through the centre of her bonnie face. But the old man, who witnessed his son's shot, was not one of those indolent sort of characters who leave a job only half complete. His son having driven daylight through the nocturnal luminary, "he gaed aff hame to his smiddy an' got a

hammer an' clinket the rod on the ither side afore it had time to cool." This story, related by the Deacon over a tumbler of toddy, made his auditors to elevate their eyebrows to their utmost tension.

"An' what cam' o' the iron rod?" one of them ventured to inquire.

"Man, you great numskull," returned the Deacon with an air of supreme contempt, "d'ye no' ken that it's used for a crank to turn the moon round and round, an' that's hoo we get auld moons and new anes."

Types of character similar to the Deacon are not at all uncommon, though it is rare to meet with cases where it has been so strongly developed. He was one of that class of people called boasters or braggarts whose "gease are all swans," and who love to bounce about themselves on all occasions. The modern Yankee possesses a great many of the characteristics of Deacon Elshender, and such classic heroes as Sir John Falstaff, and Captain Bobadill, who have been represented as drawing the long bow, are types of the same character. The Deacon had a vivid imagination, a retentive memory, and a superficial acquaintance with history, geography, and natural science, but his presumptive ignorance, which revealed itself when he played the oracle, rendered him absolutely ridiculous. In short the Deacon was universally set down as a "blawin', haverin auld fule," but there was so much grotesqueness and absurd improbability in all his stories that rendered them highly unique and enjoyable. It is said that a professional boaster must have a good memory, and the Deacon was highly gifted in this respect, for he would repeat the same story again and again without the least variation, and we are inclined to believe that from habit these tales had got so imprinted on his memory that he had grown to believe that they were actually true.

Outwardly the Deacon was but a common-place looking personage ; his lank and ungainly figure, heavy "cloiting" gait, and the "durf" or stolid expression of his cadaverous countenance were not calculated to strike a stranger. His quaint costume, consisting of sleeved waistcoat, leathern apron, and knee breeches, might have suggested the idea that he was an automatical fossil of some vulcan of a bygone age. For many years, at least during that lonely period of his history between the death of his first wife and the marriage of his second, James' sole companion was a tame Nanny goat that followed him about like his shadow. The Deacon and his goat were inseparable from each other. A strong affinity seemed to exist between the pair ; his dumb follower apparently having imbibed some of his own peculiar characteristics. In fact, Nanny was about as unsociable and stolid in her demeanour as her master. She stalked along by his side with an air of profound gravity, seemingly utterly indifferent to the opinions or presence of the lieges, and woe betide the thoughtless youngsters that dared to bar her progress. Nanny sent the luckless children that stood in her way sprawling in the gutter, and stalked on utterly indifferent to their frantic screams or the maledictions poured on her head by their enraged mammies.

If the Deacon was to be believed his Nanny had a history about as wonderful as his own. Nanny was none of Scotland's goats, but was imported from the island of Juan Fernandez, and from certain marks on her ears was actually one of the goats that Alexander Selkirk caught and tamed while he lived a solitary recluse on that desert isle. James had a high admiration for the sagacity of goats, and used to declare that they shewed more attachment to their owners than the dog. During his visit to London, of which we shall speak yet more particularly, he met with a

strange corroboration of his theory regarding the goat. Passing through Long Acre one day a big Billy goat came out of a yard and after snuffing him all round began to follow him like a dog. A gentleman who was standing at the "yett" remarked to the Deacon, "my goat seems to be acquainted with you, for I never saw him take up wi' ony body before." Then continued James "the gentleman an' me got on the crack thegither about the goat, an' after comparing dates we fund oot that the London Billy an' my Nanny had come owre frae Juan Fernandez i' the same ship, an' the marks on its lugs shewed that it was ane o' Selkirk's goats that he markit and sent adrift as he tells us in his Crusoe."

But the Deacon's Nanny met with a tragic end. In his old age he fell in love with Forbes Valentine, a lady who served at the Castle of Kinnaird in the capacity of cook. After some dilly-dallying and foolish love making Forbes yielded to the ardent solicitations of her antiquated lover, but before she consented to take the Deacon "for better or worse" she stipulated that "Nanny" should be sacrificed. It was a hard struggle, but the bride-elect would have her way as most brides will, and the goat was slain, whether to provide savoury meat for the wedding dinner we are not told, but the Deacon's grief was so strong that to use his own expressive language he "grat like a suckin' turkey."

But it was in his later life that the Deacon rose to fame among his neighbours. His smiddy in Fore Abbey Street was the centre of attraction for the male gossips and professed wits of the town. These gentlemen, with more time on their hands than they could profitably dispose of, found congenial occupation in "drawing out" the Deacon. This was not a difficult operation. All that was necessary was simply to relate some extravagant story, when the Deacon would

crown it with another of the same, far exceeding the bounds of probability. In this way the Deacon's biography was wormed out of him in bits and scraps. And such a history was never before given to the world. He appeared on the stage of life a perfect natural curiosity. His infant head was adorned with a crop of grass, and a double allowance of fingers and toes bestowed on his hands and feet astonished the gossips when he was ushered into existence. These unusual phenomena, however, disappeared as he waxed and grew; the grass withered and faded into hay, and then fell off, leaving in its place a luxuriant crop of hair, while the extra supply of fingers and toes dropped off, and left him with appendages like other mortals. He grew in wisdom and stature so rapidly that he was "twa foot wide and a Scotch ell lang when he was spained," but at what age he was deprived of his mother's milk he forgot to mention.

The gifts and graces with which the Deacon was endowed were something prodigious. The senses of sight and hearing were inordinately developed. When a young man he could see the coasts of Norway and France quite distinctly from the "Steeple Rock," a flat rock within high water mark on the coast to the east of Arbroath. Standing on the Boulzie Hill, from which St Andrews is but dimly visible, he could hear the bellman crying a roup in the streets of the cathedral city. And still further he had often from the same place heard the Newhaven fishwives crying "caller herrin" in the streets of Embro.

His other natural endowments, mental and physical, were even more astonishing. He had the strength of a Hercules, and could have cleaned out the Augean stable with the greatest ease if such a job had come in his way.

On one occasion the conversation in the smiddy turned on feats of pedestrianism.

"I'll wager you'll no guess hoo far I ance convoyed my sweetheart whan she cam' frae Embro to see me?" said the Deacon, looking round the group for an answer.

"Maybe the length o' Tutties Neuk," remarked a sarcastic gentleman.

"To Wormiehills," suggested another diffidently.

"The hauf-way hoose or maybe the length o' the Ferry," ventured another, winking to the auditors, who were eagerly waiting for the Deacon's explanation.

"A' the way to Embro' wi' my leather apron on, an' without my coat an' hat, for ye see she ca'd on me at the smiddy," said the Deacon triumphantly.

"An' whan cam' you hame, Deacon?"

"Hame! I cam' hame that very nicht an' streekit to my wark neist mornin' as fresh as a daisy."

As a sportsman the Deacon was never equalled since the days of Nimrod. But his feats in this line were not to be attributed so much to his skill as a marksman as to the matchless powers of his wonderful gun Samson. Amongst the numerous curiosities possessed by the Deacon was an old blunderbuss, which, if his account of its origin could be relied upon, sacred history would require to be re-written. According to the Book of Judges, Samson slew the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, but according to the Deacon he shot them down wholesale with a gun, and that veritable firelock had been handed down to posterity, passing from Jew to Gentile till in process of time it became an heirloom in the family of "Elshender the Grite." It was with Samson that he shot the moon as previously recorded. One day when out on a poaching excursion he fired Samson at "a covey o' patricks, an' killed sax hunder' o' the brutes wi' ae shot." Not a bad shot one would imagine, but that was not all. "The force of the shot sent the

ramrod flying up twa mile i' the cluds," and in its aerial flight "it strung a flock o' wild geese richt through the een." At the same time the "put" Samson gave the Deacon on the shoulder knocked him back owre wi' sic' a pergadis on the tap o' a fat brute o' a hare, an' killed it as dead's a herrin. Weel what d'ye think," the Deacon continned, "whan I wis gettin' to my feet I stuck my tae's i' the yird, an' turned up a foggie-toddler's byke an' twenty pints o' honey."

In every department of science and literature the Deacon's knowledge was most profound. "He ken'd a' the stars an' names o' the planets," but natural history and antiquarian lore were his special *forte*. In the course of his life he had collected a heterogeneous assortment of "nicknacks," which he grandly denominated his "museum."

"He had a routh o' auld nicknackets,  
Rusty airn caps, an' jinglin' jackets,  
Wad haud the Lothians three in tacketts  
A towmond guid,  
An' parritch pats, an' auld saut backetts  
Afore the Flood.  
O' Eve's first fire he had a cinder,  
Auld Tubal Cain's fire-shool an' fender,  
That which distinguished the gender  
O' Balaam's ass,  
A broomstick o' the witch o' Endor  
Weel shod wi' brass."

Amongst the numerous specimens contained in the museum was a long rod, knotted like a bamboo cane.

"Did you ever see onything like that?" the Deacon would ask with a lofty air.

"No; what kind o' substance is that, Deacon?"

"Substance! find ye that oot if ye can; that's neither widd, airn, nor stane."

"What is't ava than?"

"That's the backbane o' Balaam's ass; is't no in a wonderful state o' preservation?"

Though the Deacon was ready at all times to exhibit his museum, he would on no account allow any of his friends to handle any of his specimens. "Look at a' thing, but touch naething," was his invariable injunction to all and sundry. Notwithstanding this general prohibition he was often sadly annoyed by too inquisitive visitors, who, not satisfied with a mere cursory examination, would persist in handling the most sacred things which the deacon possessed. One of these individuals who regularly frequented the smiddy went by the nickname of "Shakin' Sandy." Sandy was a character in his own way, and a great cronie of the deacon's, but his inveterate habit of handling everything he saw vexed the Deacon's righteous soul, till he vowed to teach Sandy a lesson he would never forget. Leaning over the smiddy-door one day he espied Sandy turn the corner of Allan Street, and come "shauchlin" along the pavement towards him. The Deacon smiled grimly to himself, hastily withdrew from his post of observation, and seizing an old rusty key he thrust it into the forge with the tongs, and a few vigorous pulls at the bellows brought the key to a black heat. Then he tossed it carelessly on the bench in such a position as it could not fail to attract Sandy's attention. The next minute Sandy came hobbling in with his customary salutation, "Hoo's a' wi' you the day, Deacon?"

"The first thing the ferret-like een o' 'im lichted on was the auld key," said the Deacon, who used to tell the story with great gusto. "Man, the bait took clean. Sandy loot a grab at the key as if it had been for estin', but 'am thinkin' he burnt his fingers for ance. Man, he gaed oot wi' a yalp like a collie whan you tramp on its tail, he flang the key frae him, an' oot at the door he gaed, an' doon the Paith he ran as if there were a hunder at his tail, an' I never saw helt or hair o' 'im for a fortnicht."

But it was as a traveller that the Deacon was seen to full advantage. Was there a quarter of the world which his feet had not trod, or a wonder in Nature his eyes had not seen? Like John o' Arnha, his contemporary and compeer, he could say—

“ In Etna's roarin' flames  
I roasted tatties to my dinner,  
At Davis Straits I killed a whale,  
An' ate the greasy sinner.”

But his visit to London eclipsed all his other marvels, and formed throughout his whole life a never failing subject to dilate upon. The incidents of that journey would fill a volume, but as they form the subject of the second part of Sim Sands' poem we shall content ourselves with giving a brief outline of the most striking points in our sketch. His adventures began on the voyage from Arbroath to the Thames. While amusing himself on board the smack he fell overboard, and like Jonah was saved by a fish. A monster salmon attempted to gobble him up as he was sinking fathoms deep, but instead of making a meal of him it sent him flying aloft with a whisk of its tail, and landed him high and dry on the deck. The story is “very like a whale.” In London he met with some old friends, the chief of which was Colonel of the Horse Guards, who invited him to see a review of the regiment, which mustered ten thousand strong, every man eight feet in height, and every horse as big as an elephant. The Colonel introduced him to “Geordie” the Third at a grand banquet. “Geordie” and the Deacon “got unco thick th'gither; they had a set in at the bottle, an' drank frae ither an' till ither till they were as fou as cap an' stoup could mak' them.” “Geordie” invited the Deacon to come to Windsor an' see “Charlotte” (the Queen), but the Deacon said he “didna' gang, because he didna like to tak' sae muckle

freedom, and forbye he was doubtful if OCharlotte wad hae gi'en him a very gude reception after fillin' Geordie fou."

Amongst the natural phenomena the Deacon saw in London were a "shower o' broken bottles," a partan in Billingsgate so large and heavy that it took four shore porters to carry it, and many other monstrosities too numerous to mention.

While the Deacon loved to boast he had no patience with any one who attempted to "draw the long bow," in his company. Occasionally, however, he was caught in his own trap. One night, over a tumbler of toddy, he was vapouring about his travels.

"When I was at Riga I saw a field o' cabbages, an' ilka ane o' the stocks covered a Scotch acre."

"Gae wa', deacon, is that a'. Man I ance saw a boiler at St Petersburg a cubic mile in circumference."

"O you leein' vaig," cried the Deacon fiercely. "What on a' the airth wad they do wi' a boiler like that?"

"Juist to boil your cabbage in," was the prompt reply.

The Deacon was fairly nonplussed, and it was said that he could scarcely be got to speak a word all the evening after, so keenly did he feel his defeat.

As years rolled on his eyes, like the patriarch's, grew dim, and his natural strength abated till he became as other men. One day a wag called him to the door of his smiddy, and pointing to the highest tower of the Abbey asked him if he saw a mouse running about up there. The simple-minded smith strained his eyeballs to the utmost of their power, shook his head, and then acknowledged with a sorrowful strain—"Am no sae gleg i' the sicht as I hae been." Then placing his hand behind his ear, and bending his head towards the tower in a listening attitude for a few seconds he

added triumphantly, "Man, but I hear the beastie fitterin' aboot amon' the stanes tho'."

It was the simplest thing in the world to draw James out. Once ensconced in a cosy arm chair in the best parlour of an old fashioned public to which he was often invited after his day's toil, and with a jorum of good toddy at his elbow, his volubility knew no bounds. It was "by the way, Deacon, did you not do so and so," and off he started. "Did you once lose your leg at the harbour, Deacon?"

"Ay, that I did. I'll tell ye a' aboot that," he replied quickly. "It was ae stormy day that the schooner 'Hope' was comin' in. The sea was runnin' mountains high owre the bar, an' comin' in atween the heads at a mighty rate. Tam Simpson brocht in the 'Hope' beautiful, an' when she got to the quay they threw ashore a warp an' fastened it round the pall, but it wis nae sooner made fast than the shippie gaed a lurch—snap gaed the tow, an' the end o't cam' wi' a whack on my leg, an' out it clean aff an' it fell into the water an' sunk like a lump o' lead. Weel I gaed awa' hame. Twa or three weeks after that I wis wirkin at the study whan a laddie cam' in, an' says he, 'Deacon, your leg's lyin' i' the harbour.' Weel, I gaed doon bye an' picked my leg oot amon' the glaur, took it hame, an' rubbed it wi' spirits o' wine afore the fire, clappit it to the stump wi' a poultice, an' dogon't but it stack like a limpit to a rock, an' in three weeks it was as soond's a bell, an' stronger than the neebor o't."

We could write page after page about the famous Deacon Elshender, but we think we have said enough to illustrate the character of the man. His foibles and weak points were an inordinate self conceit and a strong ambition to be regarded as a hero, which, combined with a powerful imagination and an inventive brain, led him to concoct stories and adventures of

the most extravagant nature to gratify his personal vanity. It was often a subject of controversy whether the Deacon believed his own tales, or expected others to believe them, but no conclusion could be come to on the point. There was not a spark of humour in the Deacon's disposition; he was seldom seen to smile, and even when relating the wildest extravaganza the muscles of his face never relaxed their stern and stolid rigidity. He was always in a serious mood; his temper was surly and morose, and if any one had the daring presumption to cast a doubt, however slight, on his veracity, he would denounce them as "vaigs, numskulls, and ignoramuses," in the most vehement manner. Indeed, unless he was the hero of the hour and allowed a monopoly of the conversation, he was far from being a sociable companion. This trait of his character was well known to the "arabs" that prowled about the Abbey. They would gather in groups around the smiddy on winter evenings and peep over the half open door,

"They loved to see the flaming forge and hear the bellows  
roar,

And catch the burning sparks that fly like chaff from a  
threshing floor."

But the strongest attraction to the youngsters was the Deacon's wondrous tales, which they would listen to with greedy ears till, tickled by the absurdity of the narrative, some impertinent imp would shout in his highest key, "O what a lee, Deacon." Forgetful of his dignity the Deacon would throw his hammer from him, seize a coach whip which he kept in the smiddy and dash off in pursuit of the "young vaigs," cracking his whip and vowing all sorts of vengeance on them for ill brocht up vagabonds. But the Deacon found it a fruitless task to attempt to teach the rising generation manners.

In his later years he was appointed keeper of the

Abbey ruins, a post which suited his tastes admirably. In the discharge of his duties as custodier of the Abbey he was assisted by his wife, Forbes Valentine, who was as much a character as her husband. The worthy couple have gone the way of all the earth, and after life's fitful fever they sleep quietly under the shadow of Aberbrothwick's ruined towers.

## APPENDIX.

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DEACON E——R'S LAST VISIT  
TO THE REDHEAD,  
AND HIS WONDERFUL TOUR THROUGH  
THE CITY OF LONDON.

BY J. SIM SANDS.

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## PART I.

Wha in Arbroath, o' either gender,  
Has not seen James, yclept E——r,  
The Burnewind by mou and bellows,  
In drunken clubs the prince o' fellows,  
Fam'd thro' the town, by great and small,  
For miracles apocryphal,  
For monstrous anecdotes and revels,  
Prodigious deeds and foreign travels,  
Which the low vulgar criticeese,  
And ca', like rogues, a pack o' lees,  
If sic a wight in town there be,  
Let him but here attend to me.

The sun had kissed the mountains fair  
Afore-my tale four hours and mair,  
High in the lift he shone fu' gay,  
On auld Saint Thomas market-day.  
'Twas July month, and nine the hour,  
Whan Arbroath fowks began to pour,

Like bees just fan they're gan to cast,  
 Some frae the east and some the wast,  
 Some for Auchmithie, famed for caulkers,  
 An' parton tae, and Luckie Walker's,  
 Some for Chance Inn, and Tam Macbain's,  
 Some for the Moon, and some the Ha'ens,  
 And frae the town's ill smell and smoke  
 Some bent the sail to seek the rock,  
 While gentry o' the better grade  
 To Torrensha'en a visit paid,  
 There, cheek by jowl, to quaff a jug  
 Wi' auld Jean Lawson, lug to lug;  
 Or, rurally wi' Jean to dine .  
 On salmon fresh and syboes fine.  
 Some gaed to get the country air,  
 An' some to see the country fair;  
 But a' resolved, ere set the sun,  
 Themsel's to steep in drink and fun,  
 As had their fathers and forbears,  
 For hunders done o' sic like years.

The sky was clear, nor harr nor cluds  
 Forebodit rain, whan James his duds  
 Reekt out frae bole, and press, and kist,  
 To take the road amang the rest,  
 His face as black as ony woody,  
 Wi' reek and turmoil o' the smiddy.  
 He gae a dight, and in a baze  
 Jumpt quick intil his Sunday's claes.  
 A coat o' hamespun brownish black,  
 Frae neck to heel hung owre his back  
 (Made by the tailor, James declares,  
 Built Lunnon Brig an' Wappin Stairs,  
 Frae whose great loins sae high and het  
 Hae sprung the Dukes o' Somerset),  
 Twa Scotch ells lang, and side, and sturdy,  
 Twa buttons sat on ilka hurdy,

Larger by far than ony croon,  
Or double Portuguese doubloon,  
O' ramshorn rich made by himsel,  
A dizen sic graced each lapel.  
Tied round his neck an ourlay spruce,  
Large, white, and bright's a flag o' truce.  
Upon his thighs, to charm the belles,  
A pair of inexpressibles  
O' satin rich, auld Cook's compears,  
Deep sunk into the vale o' years,  
Made o' the far-famed silken woo  
That grows upo' the kangaroo.  
Upon ilk knee a buckle shone,  
O' siller bright and Bristol stone,  
Dug out, the Deacon swears its true,  
O' the burning rocks o' Timbuctoo.  
Upon his shanks hose dazzling bright  
That on a day had passed for white.  
Shoon graced wi' buckles clear and bredd  
Contained his feet; and on his head  
A hat on earth had ne'er a fellow,  
Spacious as ony umbrella;  
And mittens, white as drifted snaw,  
Were clapped upon ilk horny paw.

The Deacon thus wi' satisfaction  
Looked till himsel', and cleared for action,  
His lang Queen Anne, his darling gun,  
That fields had gained o' fame and fun,—  
That gun that Sampson aft had bore,  
The Deacon said, in days of yore,  
And cleared the heads, and harns, and banes,  
O' a' his foes the Phillistines.  
Down frae a shelf, whar it had roostit,  
'Mid rotten cheese an' bacon foostit,  
Syn Ohristenmass was past a year,  
He seized and hugged his treasure dear.

Neist, tho' o' former beauty shorn,  
He took his bag and powder horn,  
That powder horn that Abra-ha-am,  
The father o' the faithful, gae him ;  
And threescore musket balls or so,  
Run at the siege o' Jerico ;  
And wads all cut o' nice bend leather,  
Which the auld Deacon dead, his father,  
Had tann'd himsel, or he's a leear,  
I' the great tanpits o' auld Baalpeor.  
Thus rigged out frae tap to tae,  
Prepared for brute or human fae,  
Awa' James trounced wi' utmost speed,  
To meet his friends at the Redhead,  
That sacred spot o' fame and bliss  
Whaur yearly, on sic days as this,  
He had sojourned for fifty summers,  
To fire his gun, and see the limmers,  
To recapitulate his acts,  
And prove they were na lees but facts,  
And there to tak' a last fareweel  
O' the sacred spot he loed sae wee'.  
Auld Aberbrothock's streets he clears,  
Across the Boulzie hill he steers,  
And passes, as the clock strikes ten,  
Baith Whiskerha' and Seaton Den.  
The Steeple rock behind him lies,  
And onward still the Deacon flies,  
While scores o' chubby rascals run,  
Close at his heels to see the fun,  
To hear his wondrous tales and stories,  
And see his deeds unmatched and glorious ;  
While James, regardless, keeps the track,  
And turns upo' the rogues his back.  
At ilka stride he tak's fu' rare  
He clears a hunder feet and mair,  
The Mason's Cove, the dark, the light,

He leaves behind, till on the height  
Auchmithie first comes in his sight.  
There suddenly he halts and wheels,  
A thousand rascals at his heels,  
And grounds his arms in utmost haste,  
And thus the tiny mob addressed :—  
“ Keep back, keep back, ye’ll blaw the gaff—  
I see a scart near twa mile aff,  
The deil a scart amang a hunner  
Ye e’er saw like it—sic a wonner.  
See, see, he sits now by his lane,  
A mile beyond the — stane.  
L——d ! what a shot, aff twa mile guid—  
The sicht o’ m fires my very bluid.  
He’s mine I’m sure.—Look how I’ll hit him  
I’ the head, besides the muckle foot o’ m.  
Look at this shot, as aff I send her,  
Frae the mighty gun o’ James E——r,  
And tell when I am dead and buried,  
How far I shot, and this gun carried.”  
Wi’ that James falls upon his knees,  
And points his gun some twal degrees  
O’ altitude beyond his bird,  
Cocks his right ee, and’s nose i’ the yird,  
And draws the trigger sic a baff  
The marrot heard it twal mile aff.  
The mob, wi’ perfect fricht, fell down,  
The Kittywake drapp’d in a swoon,  
The Tammy Cheeskie fled wi’ fear,  
The dread concussion split the air,  
And James arose, black as a brock,  
Recovered’s arms, and thus he spoke :—  
“ He’s dead—he’s dead—he’s got my slug—  
He’s pierced, ye’ll find, frae lug to lug ;  
And, after’ts done that business clean,  
It’s pierced a salmon through the een.  
Ye’ll ken my lead, its lang aught squared,

It's lyin', I see, a hunder yard  
Beyond the scart, on a bunch o' dilse.  
Just close beside the new killed grilse."

As whan the storm begins to pour,  
Or thunder loud begins to roar,  
So roared each urchin, "L—d ! hurra,  
O sic a lee !" What's that d'ye say?  
A lee, ye good-for-naething Tartars,  
The sons o' rogues, and drucken carters.  
The scum o' a' the world I see,  
Hae ye the impudence to say I lee.  
Confound ye for a set o' vagues,  
That's fed on dirt, and clad in rags,  
Streek out your houghs and come wi' me,  
An' a' I've said I'll let you see.  
Run down that road as fast's you like,  
Cross owre that style and Cadger's Dyke,  
Deil tak' the hinmost, Satan tar you  
If in the race I dinna war you.  
A lee, ye vague—ye said a lee,  
Ye d——d young scoundrels follow me.'  
As giant wi' his seven-league boots,  
Or as a star in winter shoots,  
So aff the Deacon quickly shot  
Past Windy Hills and Gaily Pot.  
Unheeded noo the light sea-maw  
Soar'd round the cot o' Tangleha'.  
The Deacon fled like lightning snell,  
And frae his troop bore aff the bell.  
Auchmithie comes—still on he bent him,  
Baith kirk and alehouse flee ahint him,  
Fishwives and creels, bairns and mussels,  
Promiscuous in the dirt he jostles.  
Acquaintance—friend—he never sees,  
But like a race-horse past them flees.  
The mains are passed, baith slap and style.

His troop o' Tartars hint a mile,  
 His dangers a' are gane and past,  
 The wished for prize appears at last.  
 Noo like an eagle see him dart,  
 On silver grilse—and sable scart;  
 An' wonderfu', the slug o' lead  
 Lyin' i' the dilse, as James had said.  
 Like angry bees, behold the crowd  
 Rinnin' and fightin' a' the road,  
 To owretak' James maist like to burst,  
 Strivin' wha 'mang them shall be first,  
 While James contentedly his cud  
 Chows, spits, and brushes aff the mud,  
 Sits down upon the rock, and fa's  
 To open his oracular jaws,  
 Just as the mob comes up to see  
 Of prodigies this prodigy—  
 "I tellt ye sae," said James, "ye veepors;  
 Ye'll ca' me leein' like your neebors.  
 A gude ane, faith," exclaimed the Deacon,  
 "I wha hae been a shining beacon  
 For generations far and near,  
 Ye'll ca' me, like your dads, a leear.  
 A pretty story, blast your een!  
 Whan did they ever catch me leein' ?  
 Come here you pack o' vagues, and look  
 At a' I tellt ye, here i' the nook.  
 See there they are beside the dilse,  
 Baith scart, and lead, and salmon grilse.  
 What think ye now, ye vagues? am I  
 A leear like yoursels? reply.  
 Ay, ye may laugh, stare, or gae daft;  
 I've done that trick no ance but aft;  
 And if I'd time, as now I've nane,  
 I'd do the same this day again.  
 But stop—preserve me!" here he swore,  
 I'm sure I've see that grilse afore—

As sure's a gun—it canna be  
That fish I fought i' the North Sea !  
It's just her, faith it's past a doubt ;  
I ken her back and speckled snout.  
Come here, ye vagues, and I shall tell  
What to you will prove a miracle.

'Twas in a smack, near three year syne,  
Upon a day in summer fine,  
I left Arbroath, fifteen knots runnin',  
To see the sights and fowks o' Lunnon.  
The smack was full, the deil be in her,  
Wi' a' kin hind of saunt and sinner ;  
An' I had wi' me, I may say,  
A' kind o' gear syne Adam's day,  
Whilk I intended as a sample  
O' my museum, rich and ample,  
To lat the Lunnon gentry see 'em,  
And quite knock up their grand museum,  
Which they've the impudence to call  
The British and the National.  
Rings, brooches, staves, goold, horn and pebbles.  
Sheepheads, and skeletons, and Greenland Bibles,  
Hammers o' iron, brass, flint, and banes,  
Coins o' porphyry, fish, and whinstanes,  
Chinese and Japan wares and chrystal,  
An' Tippoo Saib's ain sword and pistol,  
Auld Pharaoh's beard, Sesostris' feet,  
And Cleopatra's winding sheet,  
Grand Flemish yarn brought owre by Crummel,  
Ten spindles fill a lady's thumble,  
An Anglo-Saxon's warping loom,  
And auld King Robert's twal inch thumb,  
Auld Jacob's staff and fishing pirn,—a  
Sprout o' the ancient church o' Smyrna,  
That's mentioned in the Revelations,  
Preserv'd entire 'mids wreck o' nations,

That grew amang its ruins fine,  
I' the time o' the Emperor Antonine,  
A Boshman's sword, a Caffre's spear,  
The foot of a white Greenland bear,  
Whilk the Dundee smack, the Horn,  
Catch'd aff the Cape o' Capricorn.  
It claw'd the crowns o' gude twa hunder,  
Afore they got the d——d beast under.  
A knife o' a New Zealand chief,  
Mad' oot o' a red coral reef,  
A Chinese shoe frae auld K-Whang,  
An inch and scarce three quarters lang.  
The quean that that same slipper wore  
Was forty years o' age and more.  
A scimitar frae the Minallas,  
And twa tremendous lang spadillos,  
The warlike chieftains o' Loo Chooi  
Use to run ilk ither through wi',  
And whilk proves to all demonstration  
Hall's fibs to be a fabrication,  
Baith Cheop's and Cephrena's laws,  
Engross'd with two sun eagles' claws,  
Upon the skin of ane auld buss,  
The Egyptions ca' the Papyrus,  
And manufactured on the Nile,  
'Bove Grand Cairo ten thousand mile,  
The backbane too o' Balaam's ass,  
A seal of true Corinthian brass,  
As big's the mou o' this same gun,  
And yet it weighs some twenty ton ;—  
In short, the nicest sma' collection  
O' things within my recollection.  
Weel, aff we gaed, a fine like day,  
Cross'd owre the bar and passed the Tay,  
And, wi' some punin' cap'rin', haulin',  
We pass'd the Bass and auld Tantallon,  
An' on we gaed as weel's could be.

Berwick was shoon upon our lea  
We'd just our supper got o' keeps,  
As we cam' to the Norwich deeps.  
I there sat down upo' a sail,  
Leaning quite careless owre the rail,  
Reading, as well as I could see,  
Th' auld Advertizeer o' Dundee,  
And wond'ring at the monstrous lees  
The author o' that paper gees.  
Upon my hand that held the news  
I had a ring o' Syracuse,  
That Hannibal the Carthaginian  
Had worn, that's Johnny Smith's opinion.  
A diamond on the outside scarce,  
That wi' its light your soul could pierce.  
Weel, what d'ye think ?—a's yet gaen weel,  
When the d——d auld smack here gae a heel.  
The deil the like o't ere ye saw.  
Owre, owre I gaed, ring, news, and a',  
And lightit clean as ony howdy,  
Faith, at a splash, heels clean owre gowdy.  
I made, I'm sure, an unco splatter,  
As I plung'd amon' the cursed sea-water ;  
And doun I gaed in ocean madam,  
At least, I'm sure, ten thousand faddom.  
The Lord preserve me noo ! I thundered,  
I'm droun'd at last, and the smack's foundered,  
(They heard me fine aboon the water)  
The sooner out I'm sure's the better,  
Weel here I sat in contemplation  
O' my unfortunate situation.  
For lang three hours upo' the clock,  
An' a' the time maist like to choke,  
The fishes round about me sailin',  
An' partons in the boddam trailin'.  
Light frae the tap I needed none,  
The diamond shone as bright's the sun ;

But then it was an awfu' thing,  
To dee here like a rotten ling.  
Weel, what d'ye think ?—just as I'm gien  
Mysel' entirely owre to dyin',  
Fa flees like lightning bright and grand  
But a nice samond at my hand,  
Ta'en wi' the rich and dazzling light,  
The ring sent out sae clear and bright,  
And like a shot, or I could stap him,  
Or close my nieve to get a wapo'm,  
He swallows, faith, baith ring and news,  
And to the tap my body pu's,  
Trying' to get the ring by'ts lane,  
Or saw clean aff my shacklebane ;  
But sall, I fought him out and out,  
And nearly put him to the rout,  
Whan in a trice I got a bang,  
Wi' sic a sough my twa lugs rang—  
Wi's ugly tail, by auld Saint Duthac,  
He cured me fairly o' the toothache ;  
And aff I gaed to pare my corns,  
Like a pokefu' hech, o' rotten horns,  
And down I lightit on my back,  
Like a buratin' turbit, i' the smack.  
Weel, whan I fand mysel' alive,  
And saw I'd still my senses five,  
I looked, my finger bleeding sair,  
To see if news or ring were there.  
The deil ae bit, faith. News and ring  
Had gien me baith the Highland fling ;  
For that curst samond, Satan seize her,  
Had carried aff ring and Adverteeser.  
Now, what is strange, this beast I've got  
I'm sure has baith in's ugly gut.  
I'm sure that's her (wi' that he rikest aff  
The rock) as clear as ony pikestaff.  
I'd ken that ugly mou again,

Tho' I saw'd in the Seaton den ;  
And I'll tak' here, in sterling money,  
A bet o' twenty pound, wi' ony  
O' you big chaps, double or quits,  
This samond here has baith in's guts."

"Dune ! dune !" a thousand voices rang  
James out his jockteleg did bang,  
"Is that a lee, too ? hech ! ye brutes,  
Come here and see the fish's guts !  
Come, my auld friend, succumb—surrender ;  
I hae ye sure's the Witch o' Endor,  
Ye beat me i' the sea, nae doubt,  
But I shall bring your robberies out.  
Ay ! ay ! I have ye at the last,  
Baith ring and Adverteeser fast."  
Wi' that he seizes by the throat  
The salmond fierce that he had shot.  
Intil her gills he fikes and fummels,  
Cuts out the guts and doun them tummels,  
Full strange to tell, the Adverteeser,  
And a Cameo ring o' Julius Cæsar,—  
"Ha ! ha ! ye idiots," now exclaims  
In ecstasy our auld friend James,  
Am I a leear ? mischief sink you !  
Can you trust your e'esight here, bethink you ?  
Come, come, the siller—pay your bet,  
And get the fish and news to eat ;  
And if ye dinna on them scunner,  
I'll think for ance I've seen a wunner.  
Ye winna do't—then come away,  
Scart, fish, and trash—and chaps, gude day."

Wi' that the Deacon shouldered high  
His Samson lang, and aff did fly.  
Awa past Hungerheigh he strides,  
The scoundrels like to split their sides,

Sticking ahint as fast's a burr—  
 James thrashin' ilka foot and fur,  
 To mak' the game start up before him,  
 And like a tiger syn devour them.  
 Ilk bush—ilk thicket gets a stroke  
 Frae James's foot might fell an oak.  
 Till "stop," James says unto himsel',  
 "There's game, I'm sure. I find the smell  
 I' the park o' Ethie, neist the heugh.  
 But fat kind are they ?—big enench  
 To feed a regiment upon."  
 Wi' that doun gaed auld Sampson's gun,  
 And prime and load in order gae,  
 Wi' a double shot o' patent B.  
 "Ay, that'll do. I'll gie them music  
 As sharp as ony dose o' physie.  
 This is a day of days my glory ;  
 A lee ! a very pretty story—  
 Come shoulder arms—and, Sampson, noo  
 Wi' laurels crown this aged brow."

The Deacon noo wi' glory sped  
 Past Ethie Muir and Kercockhead—  
 Past Ethie House and parks so sweet,  
 His game to find, and friends to meet.  
 Owre dykes and ditches, feal and broom,  
 James stalks as big's the Pope o' Rome ;  
 Till in the park neist to the heugh  
 A covey raise wi' sic' a sough,  
 O' pae-tricks grey and plovers green,  
 As seldom here's been shot or seen.  
 James, sair forfoughten out o' breath,  
 Levell'd his arms o' certain death,  
 Aff, aff they gaed, and sic a rair,  
 It beat the fire o' the Temeraire.  
 Congreve's wild rockets were a joke  
 To the report ; and sic a smoke

Auld Sampson sent frae's inmost home,  
It beat to sticks the largest-bomb.

Mount Etna was a type in fact,  
O' the glory o' auld Sampson's crack.  
Three hunder o' the covey fell.  
James, wi' the crack, ca'd owre himsel'.  
Stretch'd out he lay, like ane fell'd dead.  
Auld Sampson flew right owre his head,  
The ramrod o' his mighty gun  
Gaed aff, it seemed, to seek the sun,  
Or wi' him to tak' a race  
Into th' immensity o' space.  
But, na, a flock o' wilk geese proud,  
Tow'ring in air aboon a clud,  
Received the ramrod ilka ane,  
And doun they cam' a' link'd by th' een,  
Seven noble brutes string'd a' thegither,  
And fatter geese ne'er wat a feather.  
James saw them fa', as on his back  
He lay, quite stunned wi' Sampson's crack,  
And up he tried to raise his hurdies,  
To count and gather up the burdies ;  
But something saft aneath him lay,  
Smothered amon' a crap o' hay.  
Out, out he bring'at in death's cald sweat,  
A macon killed by's fa' i' the seat ;  
A hare, a monster, sic anither.  
A macon, faith ! the macon's mither.  
" My faith," said James, " this, weel I wot,  
Is no' far frae a mows o' a shot.  
The deil a shot I e'er heard tell o'  
Cam' near't but ane. There's no a fellow  
Till't that I ken o', save the ane  
I fired at the moon mysel' alane,  
Wi' a het rod o' Swedish iron,  
That I confess was past this firin'.

I pierced her clean, and thro' and thro',  
 And ye'll see't there stickin' still I trow.  
 It's clinkit wi' a big steel net,  
 And helps her baith to rise and set.  
 But let me up—my ahuder's wrang,  
 Nae wonder, wi' auld Samson's bang.  
 I wis' it binna broken, faith—  
 I'm out o' strength and out o' breath.  
 Come, lat me up—my friends, indeed,  
 Wi' yon same shot may think me dead."  
 Wi' that he claps into the yird,  
 Ae foot to catch the nearest bird.  
 On's knees he tries to raise his corpus,  
 Unwieldy as a half blawn porpus.  
 A' winna do—owre, owre he fa's,  
 Grasping the earth wi' baith his paws,  
 And kicks wi' his feet—was e'er the like ?—  
 Out o' the sward a Todler's byke.  
 The scape rows out upon the bent  
 Wi' twenty pints o' hinny in't.  
 The bees, the mither, queen, an' a',  
 Frightened to death, flee fast awa',  
 Leaving the Deacon in prostration,  
 Dumb wi' fatigue and admiration,  
 As conqueror, to eat that hinny  
 Had cost them fash and summers many.

The mob had just cross'd owre the dyke,  
 As James turned up the Todler's byke.  
 They heard auld Sampson's crack so dread,  
 They saw him fa', and thought him dead,  
 Each rascal ran, to save his distance,  
 And render James his last assistance ;  
 But whan they came they fand him lyin',  
 No very weel, but far frae dyin'.  
 Ane winkit and anither leugh ;  
 Some spak' o' throwing owre the heugh ;

Some spak' o' bluidin, settin' banes,  
 And some for yirding him at ance ;  
 Some purposed in the sea to grave him,  
 To lat anither salmon save him ;  
 Some were for throwing him i' the quarry,  
 And some for bringing Dr B——.  
 But a' agreed, 'mong roars of laughter,  
 To spoil the Deacon o' his slaughter,  
 And straight divide the game he'd got  
 Amang them jointly on the spot.  
 James listen'd wi' attentive ear  
 To a' they said, but wax'd wroth here.  
 "Divide the spoil—the deil !" said James,  
 " Divide my game, ye devil's limbs !  
 Ye'll rob me o' my spoil, ye sinners,  
 And swear yoursel's hae been the winners.  
 Flee—flee, ye gude for naething vagues."  
 Wi' that James starts upon his legs,  
 Primes, loads again, and cocks his e'e.  
 "Flee—flee, ye vagues, I redd ye, flee,  
 Or I shall send you owre the rock  
 Like Jehu, wi' your banes in a pock."

As whan the cunnin' hoody craw  
 Smells pouther strong and flees awa,  
 So flee the mob frae Sampson's gun,  
 And aff in a' directions run,  
 Owre dykes and ditches fast they rattle,  
 Leaving behind the field o' battle  
 To James, the sheep and horn'd cattle.  
 It's as weel for you (here James bann'd),  
 Ye vagues, ye've ta'en your foot i' your hand,  
 Or I wad clear'd you at ae whup,  
 And turned your ugly splash feet up.  
 Ae shot o' Sampson wad hae pinn'd you  
 As dead's the bugs that out o' the window  
 I threw i' the inn o' the Canongate

O' Edinbro', at whilk I stay't.  
They were, I'm sure, full sax feet deep  
I' the bed in whilk I gaed to sleep ;  
But I clean'd them in a sad curfuffle  
Wi' twa gude clats and a coal shuffle,  
And made the bed as clean's a cap,  
And took a maist refreshin' nap,  
As e'er I did my life intill't,  
After I'd a thousand million kilt.  
So it's as weel you scamper'd aff,  
Or you'd haen but sma' cause to laugh."  
Wi' that James grounds his arms again,  
The coast being clear, to count the slain.  
"L——d sic a shot ! it fairly beats  
Sampson himsel' wi' a' his feats.  
The L——d preserve me,—I'll gae gyte  
Wi' joy complete and pure delight.  
What will my friends I came to meet—  
What will they say, whan ance they see't ;  
But here they come—they'll see a wonner  
Was ne'er shown aff by ony gunner."  
"Gud, be about us, Deacon !" said  
The chief o' the corps that took the lead,  
"Fat awfu' noise was you so near ?  
So loud it broke the drum o' my ear—  
Louder than ony cannon's rair,  
It cam, I'm sure, frae the wast somewhere.  
I'm sure I ne'er got sic a fleg  
W' the firing o' your auld Mons Meg.  
'Twas like some town had been bombarded,  
Sae awfu' loud—ye maun hae heard it.  
It seem'd to gar the Redhead shake,  
Like a dread Portuguese earthquake.  
What was it ?—tell's ; for sic a wonner  
I never heard—'twas waur than thunder."  
He gae a wink and artfu' smile  
To his comrades, as he spak the while,

But James, regardless, quick did rear  
 His arms in air, and said, "Look here,  
 The noise was mine, frae Sampson thrustit,  
 Wi' sic a charge he neer hand burstit,  
 I rammed him fu' o' balls and slugs,  
 Till I've split my ain as weel's your lugs.  
 My shuder blade, the mair by token,  
 I'm sure in twa is fairly broken.  
 But that is nought ; I've haen ere now  
 Twa arms and sax ribs fractured too ;  
 And this same here, this thick right leg,  
 Lay three weeks 'neath the Lady Brig.  
 James Jameson, the Millgate barber,  
 Can swear't ?—he saw't lyin' i' the harbour.  
 Ta'en aff it was by a ship's hawser,  
 Bauff at ae whup as clean's a saucer ;  
 And yet I clapp'd it to, and sweeled it  
 In spirit o' wine, and fairly healed it.  
 It's stronger, faith, than its left brither.  
 Ye'd no ken th' ane, sure, by the ither.  
 So, as for this same shuder here,  
 I'll heal it weel aneuch, ne'er fear.  
 But, ha ! ye hanniwings, look here !  
 Nae wonder than ye heard a rair.  
 That was a shot amang a thousand—  
 Ye'll pardon me, I'm sure, for rusand.  
 Nae wonder I'm as black's a labster ;  
 It ca'd my heels clean owre Jock Wabster.  
 Sae count them out, baith birds and brutes,  
 Feathers and bees, and horned clutes ;  
 Three hunder plovers, paetricks bonny,  
 An' twenty pints o' virgin honey ;  
 A hare, I'm sure its thirty stane,  
 Wi' fat no fit to gang its lane ;  
 And seven fat geese, they're worth a kingdom,  
 It's wonderfu' fu nice I've string'd them.  
 I never saw a covey fatter,

A' kill'd, too, at a single blatter.  
It'll tak's, I'm sure, to get them partit;  
But how the deil will we get them cartit ?  
Three double carts, the best o' coops,  
And twenty barrels braced wi' hoops,  
Wadna near haud them half," he said.  
"No, a' the carts o' Kercockhead,  
Tho' Daniel was to yoke them a',  
Could tak thae brutes and birds awa.  
But, cart them as ye like, I'm aff—  
I see a lad on the flagstaff.  
Look at him—sae, L——d, sic a brute,  
A thousand times as big's a coot !  
That canna ought be less, I guess,  
Than the pelican o' the wilderness,  
That clecks ance in a thousand years.  
His came's as lang's a glover's shears ;  
And sic a nib, and sic an e'e,  
Upon a beast I ne'er did see ;  
His length I'm sure's twa hunder feet,  
Frae's monstrous nib till's tail complete ;  
And frae his tap until his tae,  
Less than twal yards he canna be.  
The natives say he's often seen  
About the moors o' Palestine,  
Zahara, Barbary, and Morocco,  
Fleein' as swift's the dread sirocco ;  
And in the country of the Fetches,  
They're seen in droves like the ostriches.  
He ne'er comes in a body's sight,  
But when some ill is gaun to light.  
I saw him ance at Cape de Vigo,  
Just 'fore I was shipwrecked at Riga,  
And at that time I strained my eyes  
To learn this bird's propensities.  
He lives, like snipes and savages,  
On the maist fearfu' cabbages.

I've seen them grow high, large, and round.  
Ilk occupies a piece o' ground  
Ten acres wide ; and sic a height,  
The tap o' them fairly out o' sight.  
It takes a boiler to conteen them  
A cubic mile ; for I hae seen them.  
His wings cam down wi' sic like thuds,  
You'd thought 'twas twa big thunder cluds.  
He gard the fire frae's feathers flee  
Like a galvanic battery.  
He had sic power intil his tail  
O' magnetism, he drew ilk nail,  
With a swirl round baith bolt and cleek,  
Out o' our ship as clean's a leek.  
His e'e was like the burnin' sun,  
And drapp'd red boiling metal down,  
Hard as the flint we get frae China,  
And heavier far than best platina.  
It brunt to the bane my muckle tae,  
As sair's I brunt wi' the abbey key  
Auld Shakem's ugly meddling loof  
I aye conceived was blue het proof,  
For meddlin' wi' things that neither he  
Nor ane on earth had business wi'.  
It cost him no that little fash,  
It hang three weeks until a sash.—  
The nib o' the beast was hard, such as  
The savages of the Sandwiches  
Use for their spears, or for their ain snout,  
Or for their clubs to knock their brains out.  
Hard as the wood o' Otaheite,  
Or the West Indian lignum vitæ.  
His feet were like those o' the cock  
On whilk Sinbad the sailor struck,  
And whilk that traveller calls a rock.  
It's a brute indeed that comes sae seldom,  
Nae mortal man on earth e'er killed him ;

And nae doubt's been reserved for me,  
To try my skill on e'er I dee.  
And if I but succeed until  
This feat o' arms, and the beast kill,  
I'll be mair famed than Turk or Pagan,  
St George of England and his dragon ;  
An' fan at last I come to dee,  
The cloak o' immortality,  
Without the aid o' prent or puffin',  
Will drap upo' my sacred coffin ;  
And will to latest ages keep  
My memory frae fa'in' asleep.  
So pack them up, and cart your game ;  
And, by the time you're through wi' them,  
Ye'll hae a lad to cart at last  
Hasna been seen for ages past ;  
An' if I dinna shoot him clean,  
Dinna mair trust the Deacon's een."  
As arrow wing'd flees frae the bow,  
Awa James fled owre hill and knowe,  
His Sampson loaded wi' that ball,  
James swears was fired at him by Fall.  
The shot that sent it at him gard  
His study loup twa hundred yard  
Up thro' the roof baith clean and fair,  
Takin' tiles and bricks wi'd i' the air,  
James's fore-hammer, shaft and all,  
Flew thro' the hole as weel's the ball;  
An' brought the ball, wi' might and main,  
Hale as a cap thro' the hole again.  
The ball was black, and nice and round,  
And weigh'd just neat twa hunder pund  
O' Carron ore, the first o' metal,  
An' shinin' bright's an auld tar kettle.  
And to mak sure his wark o' death,  
James clapp'd twa pund o' powder neath  
The ball, to mak the gun propel

The shot wi' force, and mak it tell.  
Awa he runs and hunkers down,  
Surveys the brute frae foot tae crown,  
Claps ower the dyke his Sampson lang,  
The trigger drew, and sic a bang  
Was never heard on earth or ocean.  
The earth cracked wi' the loud explosion--  
Until a hundred thousand splinters,  
As sma's the teepees that's used by printers.  
Auld Sampson gaed—the ramrod flew  
Right ower the tap o' Bervie-brow ;  
And to the ocean's bed did pin  
Twa ood i' the creek o' Catterlin.  
The lock flew aff, and James supposes  
It killed twa score o' bottle-noses ;  
And Sampson fairly disappears,  
After reigning here three thousand years.  
Amaz'd and vex'd at Sampson's loss,  
James high in air his hat did toss,  
To clear awa the murky smoke  
That envelop'd him like a cloak.  
The feint a rock, that I should ban,  
He saw or wounded pelican.  
Rock, pelican, and ancient staff,  
Wi' Sampson's bang had a' gane aff.  
An' James discovered on his lee  
Naught but the vast expanse o' sea ;  
Upon his bows a brae in tillage,  
And at his stern a fishin' village ;  
An' fan his ancient hurdies cockin',  
Himsel' wi' reek and rage maist chokin',  
Hale and uninjured, on the riggin'  
O' auld Jean Lawson's humble dwellin',  
Havin' in ae short moment fled  
To Torrensha'en frae the Redhead,  
A mile and mair, past wind and sun,  
Wi the awfu' put o' Sampson's gun.

“Weel, this is strange,” said James, “in faith  
An’ I could gae my corp’ral aith,  
That, frae the first creation down  
To the hour I fired that blastit gun,  
Nae mortal man took sic a loup,  
And lightit hale upo’ his d——.  
This is a quicker flight, I deem,  
Than the new invented ane by steam.  
But how the devil I cam here  
It’s past my comprehension clear.  
Unless by magnetism drawn,  
I canna guess how here I’ve faun’.”  
Then thumpin’ on his head a minute,  
To preforate it like a bayonet,  
A sudden light bursts forth on James,  
Wha starts and suddenly exclaims,  
“I see’t, I see’t, as clear’s a dollar ;  
For I mind weel, when ance a scholar,  
O’ readin’ in a prent book bright  
O’ a giant being attack’d by a knight.  
The knight was arm’d frae tae to tap,  
And gae the giant mony a wap,  
Till the giant took his horse’s shoe,  
And magnetised it thro’ and thro’,  
And drew the knight in steel frae’s horse,  
And took him aff wi’ the shoe by force,  
And gard him thro’ the white cluds flee,  
Just as the pelican has done to me.  
This happen’d, or in France or Spain,  
I’ the time o’ the Emperor Charlemagne.  
I see’t, I see’t—the ugly brute  
Has flown this way, and wi’ his clute  
Has magnetis’d me like a needle,  
And clapp’d me on the house astraddle.  
I find mysel’ frae tap to tae  
Charged het wi electricity,  
Just like an overcharged retort,

Made by the beast a warld's sport,  
And placed down here upo' my b——  
I' the middle o' Jean Lawson's lum."

But leave we James upo' the riggin',  
And tak' a view o' the inside o' the biggin .  
Jean, fan she heard the Deacon light,  
Her rev'rend nose began to dight,  
Stopp'd in her usual vocation  
O' culinary preparation,  
Look'd to the lum, and then the roof,  
Spat in her neeve, and closed her loof,  
And out she bang'd and made her egress,  
Ferocious as an untamed tigress,  
And thus began upon our hero,  
Fierce as Caligula or Nero :—  
"What the deil are you ?—what d'ye do  
On the tap there ?—are ye mad or fou ?  
Ye're black as a wild man o' the woods.  
Drapp'd ye frae starns or frae the cluds ?  
Ye're surely daft, or deaf, and dumb,  
I'm sayin'—you're closing up the lum.  
He minds me nae mair nor a coot.  
Ye've pushioned a' the kail wi' sute.  
The salmond's spoilt as weel's the kail  
An' everything's uneatable.  
Whar came ye frae ?—the deil ? I'm sayin',  
D'ye ken that this is Torrensha'en,  
That that's Redcastle—yon's the Boddam,  
An' that's my lum beneath your droddom.  
The man is perfectly dementit,  
An's looking's if he hadna kent it.  
But, bless my heart and head," said Jean,  
Haudin' up her hand to shade her een,  
"It canna be auld James, sae douce,  
Ridin' on the riggin' o' my house.  
It's just him, faith ! Losh, hae a care o's,

He's surely daft, or there's a pair o's.  
 I've aft thought, when the stoup was fillin',  
 He wantit twopence in the shillin';  
 But I ne'er dream'd," said this virago,  
 "To see him i' the loupin' ague,  
 Loupin' like Spottie ower fouk's houses,  
 As easy, faith, as my cat puss does.  
 Whaur the puir man'll mak his landin',  
 I'm sure its past my understandin'.  
 Like mony ane, I fear, that drinks,  
 He'll land in bedlam or the links,  
 Or, dish'd as clean as ony samond,  
 Be handit ower to Charlie Cramond.  
 But that he's daft right out and out,  
 I think there canna be a doubt;  
 But how to get him safely down,  
 W'out risk o's life, or loss o's crown,  
 And clapp'd within an iron stauncheon,  
 I own it's past my comprehension."

Just as Jean finish'd her oration,  
 The Deacon closed his cogitation,  
 Cam aff the lum, and placed his foot  
 On the house's tott'ring parapet,  
 Balancing himsel' upon his toe  
 As steadily as could Ducrow;  
 And to Jean's oratory rich  
 He thus replied, "Gae in you b——.  
 Could you but fathom or could see,  
 The depths o' electricity,  
 I could the secret soon unravel  
 How I'm placed down upo' your gavel,  
 But your weak stupid fisher head,  
 That's heavier than the heaviest lead,  
 Could na see through the mighty prism,  
 That shines replete wi' magnetism,  
 Thro' whilk I'm clapp'd, like cripple Gemley,

Wi' my posteriors in a chimley ;  
Or like auld Rob, that stealt the plaiden,  
And carried off a guid back laden,  
And, for his thievery, had the jugs  
Administered to baith his lugs.  
'Twad sair me till the sun's declension,  
To prove it to your comprehension.  
But rax me here your twal-foot trap,  
And let me frae the easin drap.  
My legs and hurdies baith are sair  
Wi' this quick journey thro' the air—  
A journey, first and last, I wat,  
Nae beast they ca' an aeronaut,  
Lunardi, Green, and sic like loons,  
Wi' their infernal air balloons,  
Includin' in their lyin' list  
Montgolfier and a' the rest,  
E'er saw the like, how e'er they blaw,  
As I the Deacon this day saw.  
But haste ye, Jean, for wi' my e'e  
I see depicted in the sea  
The friends I lately left here coasting,  
And ithers quick as race-horse posting,  
Thinkin' nae doubt, I'm dead eneuch,  
To catch me still beneath the heugh,  
Or thinkin' I'm ower sea and lan'  
Wi' the cursed beast the pelican.  
Rax me the ladder quick, and place me  
On terra firma ere they face me ;  
For should they see me here, I guess  
They'll think me mad, and naething less.  
They'd roar as loud as ony cannon,  
To see me on your easin stannin',  
And twist the laurels I have won  
This glorious day till buff and fun."  
Jean heard the Deacon quaintly utter  
This rhapsody, and wi' a flutter

Brought the auld ladder sting and ling,  
And round the Deacon gae a swing,  
Clapp'd wi' a maist discordant wap  
His foot upon a rotten stap.  
Awa it gaes, and James descends  
Like Jupiter amang his friends,  
Leavin' Olympus and his lum  
For forty years at least to come.

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## PART II.

Behold now James in conclave sweet,  
His different friends and cronies meet.  
See, with the dignity of Mars,  
Our victor in a thousand wars  
Assume the chair of auld Jean Lawson,  
As prototype o' great Munchausen.  
Hear him rehearse his wondrous doin's,  
His anecdotes, baith fresh and fou anes,  
His travels rare in every city,  
His mighty fights wi' aqua vitæ,  
His sights by land, and sights in ocean,  
His visits to the land o' Goshen,  
And, last not least, his deeds of fun in  
The monument and tower o' Lunnin ;  
While a' the time James shook his brow,  
Ilk friend and crony prin their mou,  
Or gies a cough or sober haugh,  
For fear o' lattin' out a laugh.  
James having look'd the room around,  
And having drink and silence found,  
Now opened wide his monstrous mouth,  
To slocken first his scrochin' drouth ;  
And having drunk till like to choke,  
He opened wide his jaws, and spoke,  
While round him shone, as like a glory,  
Apothegem rich and allegory.

## THE DEACON'S NARRATIVE.

" My worthy friends noo here assembled,  
 Wha for my fate nae doubt hae trembled,  
 To see me flee in æther reekie,  
 Like a wild duke or Tammy Cheekie,  
 At the rate of saxty mile an hour,  
 Entirely by galvanic power,—  
 Not by mechanical propulsion,  
 But by electrical compulsion,  
 To the great danger o' my life,  
 And certain sorrow o' my wife.  
 Leave aff your stupid clishmaclavers,  
 Your silly gibes, and drucken havers,  
 And pay attention whilst I give  
 To you my lang life's narrative.  
 This day, the last, I doubt it muckle,  
 On whilk wi' earth or game I'll buckle—  
 The last of days and summers hot  
 On which your friend shall fire a shot—  
 The last, as something tells me here,  
 I'll meet wi' you, my cronies dear—  
 The last time, too, alas ! alas !  
 I'll ever taste the social glass ;  
 Ye've seen, tho' sadly on the wane,  
 Some feats you'll never see again ;  
 And whik, believe me, are at best,  
 But a puir sample o' the rest  
 That I have done, baith first and last,  
 This forty summers gane and past.  
 It's saxty summers come the morn  
 Since I, James E——r, was born ;  
 And my auld mither, heaven sain her,  
 Said, lang before, there was within her  
 A man-child o' prodigious length,  
 O' powerfu' limb and giant's strength ;  
 And that he would astonish a'  
 The kintra round, baith great and sma',

She said—and I ne'er fand her lee—  
That, whan just sax months gane wi' me,  
Wi' my right arm I gae a budge  
That knock'd her clean out ower the hedge  
That then grew rank, and green, and bonny,  
Belanging to Provost Ouchterlony ;  
And whilk I heard them tak a bet  
In height was fully seven feet,  
A token o' the strength o' him  
Wha's flickerin' e'e is waxin' dim—  
Whan born, my father said there was  
Upon my head nae hair but grass,  
That, as the autumn waxed on,  
Grew white as hay, and hair came on.  
I've heard him say—he never bann'd—  
That I had got on ilka hand  
Aught fingers and twa thumbs complete,  
And twenty tae on baith my feet ;  
But, as I up to manhood ran,  
The tae and fingers one by one  
Fell time about—as I'm alive—  
Aff foot and hand, till only five  
Remained at last, complete as hingers,  
Five goodly tae and just five fingers,  
Leavin' my father disappointit,  
Tho' still you'll see I'm double jointit.  
My een that noo are black's a bead.  
Were then a bony scarlet red.  
If ye've e'er a white rabbit's seen,  
Her's was the colour o' my een.  
But workin' in yon cursed hole,  
'Mid iron, sheep heads, coom, and coal.  
They changed, afore your hands you'd crack,  
Frae shining red to patent black ;  
And, like the crap in guid hairst weather,  
Metamorphozed me a' thegither—  
That day my mither spained me I

Was ae foot wide and three feet high,  
 And had as muckle lear and knowledge  
 As ony vaig bound at a college.  
 Twa double rows o' teeth I had,  
 And every seam three inches bredd ;  
 But wi' the toothach's cursed pain  
 The twa rows coalesced in ane,  
 And pared down the remainder close,  
 Till they became sae sma' and boss,  
 That, finally, within my chowks,  
 My teeth became like ither fowks'.  
 My power o' hearin', as ye ken,  
 Was glegger than the maist o' men.  
 I've stood upo' the steeple here,  
 And heard the bellman cryin' clear  
 In auld St Andrews and St Madox,  
 "Fine cauler skate and stinkin' haddocks ;"  
 And mair nor that, I've heard them rarin'  
 On Embro' streets, "fine wastlin' herrin' ;"  
 And heard the wives there, fou's a bat,  
 Cryin' loud and lang, "O wha'll buy saut,"  
 Just as distinctly every bit  
 As tho' they'd cry'd them at my foot.  
 That shows, you'll own, without my swearin',  
 I was na dull, at least in hearin'.  
 My e'esight aye was reckoned guid,  
 As a proof o' whilk, I ae day stood  
 Upon the Steeple Rock, and saw  
 The fire o' Mount Vesuvius fa'  
 Upon the Italian Appenine,  
 And saw the reek, distinct and fine,  
 Spreadin' its columns i' the air  
 In shape just like a Greenland bear.  
 I've seen the tow'r o' Piza juttin'  
 Out owre its foot as clear's a button.  
 As for the coasts o' France and Biscay,  
 I've seen them clear's that glass o' whisky.

Frae the auld toun's slate-covered steeple,  
Sailors and sodgers, king and people ;  
And as for Danmark and Norway,  
I saw them clear here ony day.  
For speakin' and for arguin', nane  
E'er beat your friend at speechifi'en'.  
By modesty in this particular  
Prevents me makin' an auricular  
Confession to my friends sae plain  
As some o' the fowk o' Torrensha'en.  
Suffice it, ne'er a scheme or project  
I ever lost for want o' logic—  
Ay, a' bow'd down to me, and fell,  
As before a walkin' oracle,  
So much for nat'ral gifts—I noo  
Proceed my learned ones to show ;  
My honest father, heaven bless him !  
He canna be better nor I wish him,  
Taught me himsel' a' kinds o' lear  
By the inspiration o' the ear ;  
French, Spanish, German, and Italian,  
I spoke as fluently as Pygmalion ;  
And, as for Hebrew, Greek, and Latin,  
I ran along them, swift as Phaeton  
Did wi' his horses o' the Sun,  
Or as the ramrod o' my gun.  
As for your Syriac and Chaldee,  
Persian, Chinese, and Cherokee,  
I had them on my tongue like silk,  
A' suck'd in wi' my mither's milk,  
I was, indeed, like Dr Parry  
I' the Polar Seas, a dictionary.  
But, just about fourteen years syne,  
I got a crack upo' the spine  
And on the scull, which laid me dead,  
And wi' the blow the tongues a' fled.  
There was a piece sax inches full

The doctor cut clean frae my scull,  
That left a gape by whilk, nae doubt,  
Tongues, lear, and languages, gaed out ;  
And noo I canna speak but Dutch,  
English, or Gaelic, or bredd Scotch ;  
But these ye'll own, upon dissection,  
I speak i' the most grand perfection.  
Weel, having taught me every tongue,  
Th' auld Deacon neist clapp'd his ain rung  
Into my nelve, and made me learn  
A' kind o' workmanship in airn.  
In three short months o' summer ruddy,  
I grew sae profite at the studdy,  
I could hae made, but ony fuss,  
In a single day a blunderbuss  
O' polish'd steel, pure as the vestals.  
An' twa pair gude o' double pistols.  
And cleared o' wages, clean's a leek,  
Sax guineas in a single week ;  
By and aboun an extra share  
O' guide by-jobs that brought twa mair,  
I've gard upon a winter day,  
My hammer on the study play ;  
And deil ane, too, the devil ae ane,  
But my ainsel', my livefu' lane,  
Wi' sic a birr frae morn till e'en,  
My sinens startin' frae the bane,  
Till I've manufactured for the forces  
Shoon for at last four hunder horses ;  
And after that was fairly dune,  
I made the nails and ca'd them on.  
The king o' terrors, auld James Edom,  
Can back me here—he'll swear he seed them ;  
And fat is wonderfu' and rare,  
O' my skin I never turn'd a hair,  
But wrought as clean and dry's a cap,  
But sweatin' e'er a single drap.

My lungs ware tough as ony tanner's,  
And blew as strong's a pair o' fanners,  
The wind o' them kept my body cool,  
As tho' I'd been i' the Macon pool.  
In short, I cam in sax months' time  
To be a blacksmith in my prime.  
They speak like fools (I ne'er was vain),  
O' Vulcan and o' Tubal-cain,  
O' Cyclops, and a score o' dolts,  
That forged a' kind o' thunderbolts ;  
But deil the smith I ever saw,  
Be't i' the toun or far awa,  
I couldna lickit back and side,  
And tanned him hoch, and horn, and hide,  
Wrought he in a cot or in a palace,  
Wi' hammer and a pair o' bellows ;  
And targed him tightly till he fell,  
And yielded up to me the bell.

Ah ! ah ! ye speak o' blacksmiths noo,  
But deil the ane like me I trow.  
A pack o' pechin' wratches blind,  
That the leest crack knocks out o' wind,  
That canna bring a yark without  
A'sweatin' like a burstin' nowt,  
That canna mak or fire a gun,  
But the water ower their broos will run.  
A pack o' guid for naething gowks,  
Sornin' and dippin' honest fowks.  
Oh ! were I but as able as  
But forty summers syne I was,  
I'd be ashamed to leave a loon  
O' a burniewin in a' the toun.

But I'm relapsin' whiles the soul  
Is apt to tak a rigmorole ;  
And o' her tale to lose the string,

Regardless time is on the wing,  
Arm'd with his glass, and scythe, and dart,  
To make the dearest friends to part.  
Ech, ay ! whar was I ?—ou ay, weel,  
My honest father decent chiel,  
Seein' that nature in me puts  
A little mair nor crap and guts,  
What does he do without my kennin,  
But ships me aff post haste for Lunnon,  
To mak amo' the Cocknies cash,  
And knock their blacksmiths a' to smash.  
He took me sleepin' on his back,  
Frae the Abbey Pend down to the smack,  
And shipped me there—the deil an e'e  
I open'd for hours ninety-three.  
Altho' the smack had fought ae day  
Wi' twenty privateers, they say ;  
And, tho' she row'd just like an otter,  
And her auld planks as saft as butter ;  
I never heard the cannons pappin',  
Nor heard a mush, till just at Wappin',  
We touched the beach and left the deep.  
After four days' refreshin' sleep,  
I startit up a kind o' famished,  
And no a little, faith astonish'd,  
To find me in the midst o' Lunnon,  
An' my wide pouches deil a coin in ;  
But I saw things sae new and rare,  
For meat and drink I didna care,  
And absolutely think I could  
I' the end have liv'd but drink or food,  
Had I not been accustomed to them.  
And was obligat that way to hae them.  
Aweel, we landit at this ferry,  
Wi' a scushel thing they ca' a wherry,  
No muckle bigger in her keil  
Than a common ordinar' washin' skiel,

In whilk you sit until the middle,  
And on ilk side you use a paddle,  
Just like the laddies o' our burn,  
To gar them flee or gar them turn.  
I countit at the Wappin' stair  
Thae kinds o' trash, and pair by pair ;  
And guess how mony think you I  
In ae half-hour seed sailin' by,  
Just a hunder thousan' a' bit ane ;  
An' for an anchor they've a stane,  
That they fling ower amid the feam,  
And 't stops them fairly i' the stream,  
Better than the best anchor far  
They use on board a man-o'-war.  
But I had maist forgot to tell you  
A curious thing that here befel me—  
Just as I'm stappin' up the gate  
Frae Wappin' Stairs to Billingsgate,  
That I'd sae aften heard and read  
About, what d'ye think I seed  
Lyin' upo' the dusty street ?  
But a large purse haill and complete,  
As fou o' gowd tied wi' a garten  
As e'er o' meat ye saw a parton ;  
And sew'd in silk upo' the cloth,  
'James E——r, Blacksmith, Arbroath ;'  
As sure's I live, my father's purse  
He lost in Lunnon, on the course  
Whan journeyman, I've heard him tell,  
Fifty year syne in Clarkenwell.  
It was a godsend here that came to  
His son, that deil a ane had dreamt o',  
An' in a maist surprisin' manner,  
To fill my pouch and pay my dinner,  
Whilk noo I thought I might digest,  
After sae lang a fast and rest.  
I now look'd round me high and crouse,

To try and find an eatinghouse,  
To get a steak or joint o' meat,  
Or something nice and warm to eat ;  
But, like the donkey wi' the sous  
Of hay (ilk door's a publichouse) ;  
I didna ken, as sure's a gun,  
At fat fresh door to enter in.  
I saw on ane the 'Stoup and Fillet ;'  
Upon the neist, 'The Crookit Billet ;'  
Upon anither, 'Best o' Pickens ;'  
And neist there was the 'Hen and Chickens.'  
On still I gaed, till i' the middle  
I saw at last the 'Cat and Fiddle ;'  
An' in I gaed, and din'd fu' weel,  
The best o' fair and maist genteel  
For fourpence farthing out and out,  
Includin' a pint o' best brown stout.  
The only thing that struck me here  
Was an auld practice gay an' queer.  
I saw that spoons, and knives, and plates,  
And covers, too, as black as peats,  
By chains an inch thick, like a cable,  
Were fastened a' to the floor and table ;  
But for what purpose, I can swear  
As lang's I staid, I didna speir ;  
But as the house, and looms, and table  
Were maist antique and venerable,  
I have nae doubt o' ony sort  
But what they had gude reasons for't ;  
But what they were, or guid, or ill,  
I never speired, but paid my bill.  
And, having dined, I sallied out.  
To Billingsgate I took the route,  
But on the road—Lord what a shock  
I got at Execution Dock !  
The Lord preserve me—sax lang fallows  
Were hinging heigh as Haman's gallows

The drap I saw aneath them fie,  
Like a shock o' electricity ;  
And doun they cam, and sic a sight !  
Wi' a fa' o' ninety feet in height.  
It broke their necks in fifty pieces,  
And gard them girn like auld false faces.  
Legs, arms, and feet, and hands they twistit,  
And round like whirligigs they friskit ;  
But what was maist extraordinary,  
And put me in a fine quandary,  
Was ane o' the chiels, like Mother Hubbard,  
Cried to the hangman, " Look you lubber,  
I ain't right hanged ; you, Jemmy Twitcher,  
Are but at best a bungling butcher.  
Come, put the rope behind my ear,  
Or I'll give you a kick in air,  
Shall mak your smeller smell a rat,  
As black as your auld greasy hat."  
Wi' that he gae an awfu' swing,  
Closed baith his hands, and gae a spring.  
Up, up, he gaed, faith, at ae bound,  
An' lightit hale, and safe, and sound,  
Upo' the place frae whilk he fell,  
And stood within the wooden rail,  
The rope about his neck still lockit,  
And's een fierce starting frae the sockit ;  
And there he stood till hangie got  
Beneath his lug the ugly knot ;  
Then doun he drappit, dead's an ox,  
Intil his white unblackened box.  
As shoon's I saw the lads were thro'  
I took my stick and aff I flew  
For Billingsgate, of whilk I read  
It's something like our auld Shore-head,  
Tho' twenty thousand times as large ;  
An' every shop's a fishin' barge  
Filled fu' o' haddocks, torbet, soles ;

And plaise and tench they're made like moles,  
By an' out ower ling, skate, and labsters ;  
And fish-wives drunk as our ain wabsters ;  
Roarin' and screechin', squeelin' cursin',  
Their very lungs wi' curses burstin',  
I've heard their fightin' and their bawls  
I' the ball, I'll swear, of auld St Paul's,  
Rumbling like the distant thunner,  
Wi' alths wuld make a body scunner.  
But the fish they sell, as sure as death,  
Baith ling and torbet, skate and seath,  
Are sae prodigious, ane and a' o' them,  
Ye'd no believe it tho' you saw them.  
A common skate I ance there squared,  
And fand it was lang twenty yard  
Frae side to side, frae snout to tail,  
Whilk was as lang's a thrashin' flail.  
A ling or cod I ne'er could meet  
But what at least was fifty feet ;  
An' as for mackrel and sic fry,  
Sic monsters never made my eye.  
Wi' a parton there I ance was giftit,  
It took three porters strang to lift it ;  
Their common labsters frae the Helder,  
And whilk cost there a Flemish guilder,  
Are ten feet lang ; and every claw,  
A yard and mair, however sma'.  
And, as for prices there, a herrin',  
After an hour's maist wofu' swearin',  
Ye may get bought at this same Billins-  
Gate market, for white fifteen shillings ;  
And ither fish, in hale or portions,  
Exactly in the same proportions.  
Just as I'd look'd ower every sta',  
Night's curtain dark began to fa' ;  
And now 'twas time for me to turn  
To some place whar I might sojourn,

Till mornin' should, wi' earliest gleams,  
 Enlighten his auld father Thames,  
 When I should at the earliest hour  
 Inspect ilk corner o' the Tower,  
 And see the wonders great and vast, all  
 Within this mighty ancient castle.  
 I hadna gaen a hunder feet,  
 Whan, what d'ye think does my e'en greet,  
 Upon a common alehouse sign,  
 In golden letters bright and fine ?  
 But the 'Cock and Bagpipes,' whilk my cousin  
 I kent had for his motto chosen,  
 An' in I went. He didna need  
 To spear my country, name, or breed.  
 He saw implanted in my face  
 The lineaments o' a' my race,  
 And said, ere I could stop him, "Ou,  
 God bless me, Deacon ! is this you ?  
 Weel this is kind ; but, man, fan cam ye ?—  
 Sit down—sit down—haste, haste, and cram ye—  
 Ye're starvin', nae doubt. Wife, bring ben  
 Yon fat stuff'd goose and roasted hen,  
 The cauld round frae the press, and ham,  
 A mug o' porter and a dram.  
 This is your cousin, fat and kelshie,  
 Son o' my uncle, Deacon E——."

Wi' that he hugs me in a trice,  
 Within his arms as firm's a vice.  
 I couldna see for tears, wi' blindness,  
 He choked me amaisht wi' kindness.  
 We ate and drank, and sic a weedin'  
 As we twa had at our first meetin'  
 You never saw ;—we drank a' night,  
 And didna rise till braid daylight  
 Began his beams around to pour  
 Thro' the window shutters on the floor ;  
 Whan out wee strade to see the Tower,

Our arms in ane anither linkit,  
As firm as tho' we had been clinkit.  
Awa we strade wi' mony a hitch,  
Till we cam to the outer ditch—  
A ditch, my faith, it's no a lee,  
As braid's the Tay is at Dundee—  
And cross'd it by a draw-brig thick,  
Composed o' iron, wood, and brick ;  
And soon afore the first gate stood,  
Whar forty sentries, rough and rude,  
Stood like the jailers o' our prison,  
Wi' pikes as lang's a schooner's mizin.  
We try'd to coax them first wi' gin,  
Pint after pint, within to win,  
An' wi' a' kind o' buttered wind,  
To mak us easy access find.  
We fand at last thae' kind o' gentry  
Were placed on cash alane as sentry ;  
And deil a in will they lat ony,  
Without dust down in sterling money.  
A crown the price, which soon as we  
Paid down, they whumbled round the key  
And lat us in. The awfu' door,  
As it opened, gar'd the prison roar ;  
And, fan abint us it did bang,  
The Tow'r for fifteen minutes rang.  
We passed, besides, in pairs and setts,  
Twa hunder wickets, gates, and yetts.  
Afore a thing we could discern,  
A' made o' foreign wood and airn,  
And nails into the pannels driven,  
It's wonderfu' they hadna riven ;  
Maist o' them five-and-twenty inches,  
Turn'd up within wi' iron kinches.  
The deil himsel' wi' fire, I'm sure,  
Couldna hae made them mair secure.  
But in we got at length ; and now,

Of course, ambitious first to view  
The wild beast that surpasses a'  
(But the pelican) I ever saw,  
To the menagerie we hied,  
And doun anither half-crown paid ;  
But sic a sight o' beasts o' prey,  
Reptiles, and birds, and fishes gay,  
Nane ever saw—'twas past deception,  
And far beyond my puir conception.  
Here stood a lion twal yards high,  
The lightning fleeing from his eye.  
His tail's as rough's a heather besom,  
Sweepin' a' befor't like magnetism.  
His mane out ower his shouders hang,  
Like cable ropes, three quarters lang.  
His awfu' lugs, that aft he shook,  
Knock'd clean the wind out o' the fouk ;  
And fan he roared it was sae gran',  
It would hae split a caravan.  
Neist to the elephant we lookit,  
Wi' a proboscis lang and hookit,  
They ca'd a trunk ;—but sic a trunk !  
'Twas bigger than a Chinese junk.  
It hauds within, but risk o' scalions,  
Twa hunder guide o' porter gallons,  
Be't water, beer, or swipes, or whisky ;  
An' whan he spouts—Lord, sic a plisky !  
It minds me o' a water spout,  
Whan he begins to blaw his snout ;  
An', for its strength, a giant's stroke  
To the trunk's least touch is but a joke.  
His hide's as hard's the hardest hill-stane,  
His paw as bredd's the biggest mill-stane ;  
And his four tusks, the first year's growth,  
That cam frae out his monstrous mouth,  
O' the finest iv'ry o' Berbice,  
Weigh'd thirty thousand pund the piece.

But neist preserve us ! what a picture,  
A beast they ca'd the great constrictor,  
A serpent black, and red as keel,  
In shape the likest till an eel  
Ye ever saw. His dreadfu' head  
Was seven-and-twenty inches bredd.  
His mou', whan ance he open'st wide,  
Is sax feet lang frae side to side.  
He swallows every kind o' bein',  
Creepin' or runnin', crawlin', fleein'.  
A buffalo to him's a mite,  
An elephant is but a bite,  
And tho' his guts were lank and toom,  
They're twice as big's this gey big room.  
And I was tauld, too, by a fallow,  
Dress'd up in red, and blue, and yellow,  
He'll eat up clean, in twa sma' nights,  
Three hunder bullocks, hearts and lights ;  
Kick up a row, spit and rampage,  
For mair to get within his cage,  
Until they're aft obliged, thro' fear,  
Till fling him in a hunder mair ;  
Syne stuff'd, he slips intil his bower,  
Rows himsel' up, and dovers ower.  
Neist, syne, we saw the dromedary,  
The ostrich, and the cassowary,  
That's often seen as bright's the sun  
Across the deserts dry to run.  
The porcupine frae Saint Helens ;  
The panther, and the curst hyena,  
That laughs intil a body's een,  
Whan he wants o' you to get a prien ;  
The leopard and the Bengal tiger ;  
The baboon frae the burnin' Niger,  
Besides five thousand apes and monkeys,  
Zebras, and unicorns, and donkeys,  
Eagles, vultures, ant eaters, and

The antelope frae Afric's sand,  
And a' ken kind o' beasts and vermin,  
Russian, Prussian, Dutch, and German,  
Spanish, Arabian, Portuguese,  
West Indian, and Javanese,  
And every beast that I could name,  
Savage, ferocious, wild, or tame,  
Frae every corner and ilk airth  
That I could think on here on earth.  
But the beast that struck me maist a va,  
'Mong a' the brutes and beasts I saw,  
Was a he-goat beyond the Andes,  
Belonging till Juan Fernandez ;  
His beard just like the driven snow,  
That our auld countryman, Crusoe,  
Had markit wi' his knife and shears,  
As the story says, in baith his ears.  
The puir beast kent me by the smell,  
And rugg'd and rave baith tooth and nail  
To get out wi' me ; for his granny  
Was mither to my she-goat Nanny,  
That ye've a' seen, guid, honest soul,  
Walkin' beside me cheek by jowl,  
And that I kept for twenty year  
At hame, and in my smiddy here.  
As sure as death, I roar'd and grat  
Fan the puir beast I cam' to quit ;  
And he, as tho' he had been scholared,  
Fan I shook's pa', roar'd out and bullared.  
I was sae sair affected noo,  
Nae langer could I stop to view  
Beasts, birds, or reptiles, but awa'  
Wi' my cusin straight post haste I flaw ;  
And after paying a' the fees,  
We got into the armouries.  
Preserve my e'esight frae a' harms !  
Twa hunder thousand million o' arms

Stood a' in rows a' round and round,  
Piled frae the roof down till the ground—  
Cannon o' a' kent kinds, and anes  
Made of iron, wood, and steel, and stanes,  
Some forty, fifty, feet and mair,  
(I measured them) o' calibre.  
Here in this place we round seed a'  
The tools o' the Spanish Armada—  
Swords, pistols, daggers, matchlocks, sabres,  
O' Tippoo Saib and Bethlem Gabors ;  
The Duke o' Suffolk's wooden gun,  
That made our friends the French to run  
Frae auld Boulogne, weighin' forty ton ;  
And fowk on horseback, dressed fu' weel  
In armour, buckrum, and in steel.  
And here we saw, maist strange and queer,  
At the door twa fowk called Gin and Beer.  
I guessed by measurement and sight,  
They were twa-and-forty feet in height ;  
And laughin' sair on ilka chaft  
At me, I thought, as baith been daft.  
But deil ane o' them had the manners,  
To speir if we had got our dinners,  
Or were we man, or fish, or beast,  
Or said till's 'Colley, will you taste ?'  
Having examined a' their trophies,  
We neist gaed till the jewel office,  
A room as big's our modern camps,  
A' lightit up wi' blazing lamps.  
The gleam that frae them brisk did raise  
Sax feet, and filled the room wi' the blaze,  
And shawed us first our auld King's crown,  
Wi' diamonds covered roun' and roun' ;  
Rubies frae the Redhead dug,  
And pearls as big's a goose's egg,  
Got by the fishers 'neath the brig  
O' the South Esk, and close by Dun,

A shinin' bright's the burnin' sun ;  
But i' the inside boss and hallowed,  
Unlike the stane the salmond swallowed.  
Neist, crowns, and orbs, and swords o' state,  
A' weel scoured up like silver plate,  
Cover'd ower wi' mony a costly pearl,  
Frae every corner o' the warl'.  
But deil a gem amon' them a'  
I ever like this billy saw,  
This day, by chance, that I have fun,  
By the blatter o' auld Sampson's gun.  
They wantit us, at last, to gae  
The ancient records a' to see—  
King John's auld charter, and the rest,  
That sleeps intil an iron kist.  
But hunger's angry rage forbad  
On sic a trip our houghs to faud.  
So hame we set, me and my cusin,  
On wild beasts, crowns, and cannons musin' ;  
And like twa race-horse, flew and postit,  
To fill our maws wi' boiled and roastit.  
But I forgot amaist to mention  
A fact that merits here attention.  
Just as we're finishin' our dinner,  
In the maist sweet refreshin' manner,  
As in the best o' inns or hottels,  
An awfu' shower o' broken bottles  
Came down upo' the roof, like hail  
Wi' a southwest and fearsome gale,  
That gar'd me shak frae tap to tae ;  
An' I got up to rin and flee ;  
But my friend here kept me doun frae risin',  
For this, he said, was nought surprisin'.  
I've learned since syne, that show'rs like this  
The Lunnon fowks ne'er tak amiss,  
Nor are astonish'd, faith, to see them—  
Like the eels, they're sae accustomed wi' them.

After wi' stuff we'd warmed our throttles,  
 And the sky grew clear o' rain and bottles,  
 My cusin neist proposed—guid soul !  
 After we'd ta'en anither bowl,  
 To gang and see a Maister Kean,  
 That, he said, played at Drury Lane ;  
 An' wha, he said, was a clean creature  
 For shewing Nature's every feature,  
 An' a maist social kind o' body  
 Ower Glasgow punch and whisky toddy ;  
 An' that, in short, I'd be delightit  
 Wi' a play he played, at the first sight o't.  
 So aff we gaed as fast's the Picts,  
 Intil an open coach and six,  
 Three grooms upo' the horses riding,  
 And twa chaps on the back seat striding,  
 Thro' streets and squares, ower mud and stane,  
 Till we came at last to Drury Lane ;  
 And down we gaed three hunder fit,  
 Intil a place they ca' the pit.  
 As black's a coal pit ilk thing was,  
 Till they lightit up the pit wi' gas ;  
 And in a moment, quick's a gun,  
 The place was brighter than the sun.  
 And sic a place in breadth and size  
 Ne'er met before my wond'ring eyes.  
 'Twas like a horse-shoe round and round,  
 Seven acres guid o' English ground.  
 The chandelier that ower us hang  
 Was twal ell bredd and twa ell lang,  
 And the huge curtain that they draw  
 Was the biggest that I ever saw—  
 Twa hunder yards frae side to side,  
 A hunder deep, and twa foot wide ;  
 An' fan they drew't up wi' a fout,  
 You'd thought the house's end was out.  
 Weel, here we saw twa score o' fellows,

Blawing out their cheeks as big as bellows ;  
Some playing on the big bassoon,  
An' some on things as round's the moon ;  
Some playin' on drums, and some on flutes,  
And some were roarin' loud as brutes.  
In short, I never heard sic music,  
Eneugh to mak a very sow sick.  
But up the curtain gaed, an' a'  
The orchestra noo ceased to blaw,  
And left their fiddles, drums, and pipes,  
To brace their lungs wi' gin and swipes ;  
And on there cam upo' the stage,  
An auld man tott'ring sair wi' age.  
His hair as white's the driven snaw,  
And fast ower's cheeks the saut tears flaw,  
And spak about his son and wife ;  
An' how some vague had wi' a knife  
Outtit the ane or th' ither's craig ;  
And that the curst infernal vaig  
Was on the road here, haste pell-mell,  
The puir auld man himsel' to fell.  
I grat like ony suckin' turkey,  
And roar'd, ' G——d d——n him, if he burk ye !  
As lang's my arms stay till their shudders,  
I'll keep ye frae sic bluidy b——.'  
The fowk a' stared and turned aroun',  
My cusin gently pu'd me down.  
The auld man smil'd as bright's a beacon,  
As much to say, ' God bless you, Deacon !  
I lippen till ye, that ye'll help me.'  
If I dinna, faith, may Satan skelp me.  
Weel, just as to mysel' I'm crakin',  
The puir auld man tak's sic a shakin',  
You'd thought that claes and clock their lanes,  
And flesh wad floun clean aff his banes ;  
And in there comes a little nackit,  
Red as a labater, and humph-backit,

Wi' a kind o' crown upo' his head,  
 And croakin' like a very tead ;  
 And whups a sword sax guid ell lang o'm,  
 Wi' an intent, nae doubt, to fell him,  
 And straight began syne till abuse him,  
 And o' a' kind of things to 'cuse him ;  
 And takin' up his bluidy sword,  
 Just as I jumpit on the board,  
 To rin clean thro', as sure's the woody,  
 Neck, heel, and point, the puir man's body.  
 I never said a word, but flew in,  
 An', e'er he kent fat I was doin',  
 I gae the creature sic a ticket,  
 I gard him flee clean thro' the wicket,  
 Clearin' gas-lamps an' a' before him,  
 The sword, and crown, an' a' flew ower him ;  
 And there he lay like ony Cornal,  
 I' the battlefield dead as a door nail ;  
 An' I cam aff like wha, sae crouse,  
 'Mid a' the thunders o' the house.

Noo aff I gaes, without my cusin,  
 My lugs and harns wi' rage maist bizzin' ;  
 Clear baith o' blows, and broken banes,  
 And sure I'd spoilt their sport for aunc,  
 And sav'd the auld man lith and limb,  
 And made his murderer dounce the glim,  
 Whan wha the devil does I meet,  
 At the neist corner o' the street,  
 But ane belonging to the Guards,  
 Wi' ane o' the maist awfu' beards  
 Ye ever saw. Without moubandin'  
 A single word, he claps my hand in  
 His iron loof, and shook it till  
 The blood flew out aneath the nail,  
 And lookit in my face fu' keen,  
 As tho' he could hae wi' his een

Eatit me clean, hoch, horn, and bane,  
And said complete, in Aberdeen,  
'The gweed protect me ! Lord, sic man,  
Fan cam ye tee this city gran' ?  
D'ye ken fa am I ?—can ye guess ?  
Did ye no hear intil this place,  
That your ain niece, ane o' the O——  
Married the Cornal o' the Guards—  
The Cornal, man, his leefu' lane,  
That weel ye kent in Aberdeen.—  
Hout, tout, ye ken him, tee—nae dweet ;  
Tho's beard's now black as coal or sheet.  
Come in by here, and just look at me,  
And tell me fat yoursel' ance ca'd me."  
The loah preserve me—fa was it  
But the husband o' my ain neice, Bet,  
My auld companion, friend, an' brither,  
That used baith him and me thegither  
To herry craws, and binks, and linties,  
And brak our shins wi' ither's shinties ;  
A barber's son in Footdee poor,  
An awfu' alteration sure.  
He'd now got up wi's spunk and spirit,  
To be just awing till his merit.  
A Cornal and Field Marshal too,  
O' the Horse-Guards they ca' the Blue ;  
And plastered ower wi' plates and bars,  
And chains sae rich o' goold and stars,  
Some that the King did, faith present him—  
Nae wonder that I hadna kent him.  
Weel, at his stars and gowden garters  
I'm sure I lookit full three quarters,  
Upo' the muckle weel pav'd plainstanes,  
Close by the clock o' auld St Dunstan's,  
Until we baith began to think,  
That it was time to eat and drink ;  
An' in we gaed into a hottle,

The Cornal orderin' first ae bottle  
And then anither brimer on brimer  
O' a feckless wine they ca' Hockheimer.  
Till to our supper we had risen,  
We'd swallowed baith twa cadger's dizen ;  
And after we'd our supper eaten,  
He was sae happy at our meeting,  
That he ordered in a washin' skiel  
O' a light wine they ca' Moselle,  
Whilk we drank out intil a crack,  
Wash'd down wi' some prime cogniac,  
An' hame I gaed wi' spirits light,  
Wi' the Cornal noo to pass the night.  
Neist mornin' shune, my nephew calls  
Me to come wi'm and see Saint Paul's ;  
An' put a purse into my pouch,  
Just as we mountit his barouche.  
Awa' we set wi' birr and force,  
An' in his chaise, aught noble horse ;  
Their hair like silk cam'd owre their mane,  
And white cream-coloured ilka ane,  
Aught coachmen on the board and brutes,  
Wi' stoups upo' their legs for boots.  
Ilk coachman was a private Guard,  
And drave us till Saint Paul's Kirkyard,  
Whar I alightit sure and firm,  
By th' aid o' the dear Cornal's arm ;  
And in we gaed aneath the domes  
O' the auld kirk to see the tombs,  
The coach and aught, while we ware there,  
Rattling like Jehu up the stair,  
Or waiting slowly at the foot  
O' the ladder, till we should come out.  
The stair that leads ye up, at least  
Wad haud ten carriages abreast ;  
And coaches here the live lang day,  
As safe as on a carriage way,

Rin round about, and up and down,  
Ten thousand feet aboon the town.  
At the ladder's foot, just whar they stop,  
The gentry then their way maun grop  
Up to the ball, on hands and knees,  
Just as the squirrels clim the trees,  
Or tak their breakfast, or sic fare  
As th' innkeeper shall gie them there—  
There being here a vintner douce  
That keeps a half-way eatinghouse.  
Weel, in we gaed, and round we lookit  
In mony a hole and corner cruikit,  
Inspectin' tombs, and urns, and mummies,  
Crackin' our crowns like senseless bummies.  
We saw twa statues made o' wood,  
O' Nelson and o' Colingwood,  
Painted sae natural like stane,  
You'd thought ye saw them flesh and bane ;  
Ilk statue held intil his loof  
A seventy-four that touched the roof.  
The cannon, powder, shot an' a',  
In their port-holes we clearly saw,  
And blood and banes, and harns abaft them,  
Just as the French loons there had left them.  
We saw a thousand ither fallows,  
Cooke, Burgess, Heathfield, Cornwallis,  
Our friend Lord Duncan 'mang the lave,  
And Lord Northesk amang the brave,  
Stan'in' aroun,' as white as millers,  
Atween the monstrous whin-stane pillars.  
We saw the bust o' Dr Donne,  
Wi's windin' sheet and dead claes on,  
And a variety o' cofined heroes  
Drawn to the Life—Loosh ! have a care o's !  
We saw a' kinds o' flags and banners,  
Flaffin' just like a pair o' fanners,  
Ta'en every ane frae Britain's faes,

Whilk serve the dead fowk here for claes ;  
 And eagles bright, o' goold and stone,  
 Captured frae great Napoleon ;—  
 But ane and a' was, troth, sae b g  
 And thick, I couldna grasp their leg,  
 Or tak' their true dimensions, sae  
 We paid our pound and bade guid day,  
 An' up we muntit the auld pile,  
 Round, round, and up twa guid Scotch mlie,  
 Until at last we reached the Inn,  
 But broken banes or broken skin.  
 Here after taking a dejeuner,  
 For whilk we paid a double croun,  
 Up, up, we gaed upo' the ladder,  
 The Cornal light as ony feather,  
 Until we reached wi' an hour's runnin'  
 The summit o'er the toun o' Lunnan,  
 The mighty ball o' auld Saint Paul's,  
 That copper ball o' copper balls,  
 Within whilk twenty thousand people  
 May sit and see ilk toun and steeple  
 (Whilk here I numbered owre and owre,  
 And fan' five hundred, five and four),  
 For saxty miles, baith round and round.  
 Three mile or so aboon the ground,  
 They look'd just like half-bakes the bridges,  
 An' a' the fowk like summer midges ;  
 The carriage ware as sma' as dice,  
 The biggest horse appeared like mice ;  
 And tours and houses at our foot  
 Put me in mind o' Lilliput.  
 In short, we had full ample scope,  
 Like an inverted telescope,  
 To see ten thousand times by far  
 Things less than what they really ware ;  
 And, actually, 'twas sic delusion,  
 As made us think 'twas an allusion ;

But in ae moment, faith, we fand  
Oursel's no just on fairy land.  
The cursed ball wi' some loud noise  
Was shaken frae it's equipoise.  
Out o' the hole the Cornal gaed,  
Baith hoch and horn, feet, and head;  
And doun I bang'd alang the trap  
In half a second at ae rap.  
And stopt the clock; the minute hand  
Stood like a rock at my command,  
An' catch'd upo' the very point  
Hale, sound, I'll swear, in clute and joint,  
The Cornal by the rings o's watch,  
Just as it'd been a patent catch!  
And there he did lang sax hour's hing,  
Suspended by the watch's ring,  
Till we gat ropes and ladders swung,  
An' brought him down frae where he hung;  
But his gowd watch we couldna get,  
And to this hour it hang's there yet,  
Whare ye may see't, and on it's face  
The vera moment you may trace,  
Whan the puir Cornal plumpit doun  
As safe as in an air baloon.  
As I've to answer—as I'm livin'—  
It's just three quarters past eleven.  
I've seen her wi' my auld spy-glass,  
Forty year after this came to pass,  
And still as fresh, to all appearance,  
As fan she had made her disappearance.  
Ane o' the wonders out o' ten  
Hae lichtit on the sons o' men.

After we'd got the Cornal doun,  
And got tha coach and horses roun';  
And, to get back his lang lost win',  
We had despatch'd four quarts o' gin,

Awa' we gaed to Fish Street Hill,  
New sights to see and time to kill,  
And see the noble lookin' spire,  
That chekt the plague and stapt the fire,  
As lang as ony spinning vent,  
The Cockneys ca't the Monument  
Whilk Whittington, the great Lord Mayor,  
Had clapp'd down in an instant there ;  
And whar ye'll see as sma's a bat  
Upo' the tap, his fav'rite cat,  
That travell'd owre a' countries blyth,  
Frae the Southpole to Rotherhithe,  
Still eating at a monstrous rat  
He catch'd i' the ship aff Cape Legatt,  
An' whilk I measured, tail and snout,  
Whiskers and lugs, and claws to boot ;  
And fund at length, by calculation,  
And principles o' mensuration,  
That it contained, in solid feet,  
Nett for-and-forty every whit,  
The maist prodigious filthy brute on  
Earth that ever had a clute on.  
We paid our dust, and in we entered,  
And to the tap we fairly ventured,  
Tho', faith ! I maun confess, the stair  
Made my flesh creep wi' perfect fear.  
It's like a cork-screw, but sae strait  
Ye're pu'd up, like a trout wi' bait,  
By a rope the keeper keeps a haud o'm,  
In length three hunder British fathom.  
The Monument, baith skin and bane,  
Is hew'd out o' a single stane,  
Just like the Monument they boast o'  
In St Petersburg, or else in Moscow.  
Frae its bottom till its utmost summit—  
I took it by a line an' plummit—  
It's just twa thousand feet and four,

And sax feet wide a' measured owre.  
They raised it by a paper kite  
That weigh'd six thousand hunder weight.  
The rope that kept the kite in air,  
A piece o't's lyin' i' the stair,  
Was the cable o' the largest frigate  
That out o' Portsmouth e'er was riggit ;  
And the tail that at the dragon hang  
Was nett ae mile three quarters lang ;  
And kite and wind and tail brought up  
The Monument clean at ae whup,  
And there it stood without a lee,  
Synne the spring o' nine and fifty-three.  
I maist forgot to tell you here  
What ne'er to ony did appear,  
Until I fand it out mysel',  
Whan marchin' round the wooden rail,  
That the stair's strait inside here contains  
Receptacles for human banes,  
Called in the east a sarcophagus,  
By the historian Simon Magus,  
But whilk the brutes, would you suppose it,  
Have turn'd intil a water closet,  
A proof o' a' that's come and gone  
O' the Gothic race we live amon'.  
Well, as around we're lookin' here,  
I met a thing, faith, gay and queer ;  
For, fat d'ye think ?—my carrier doo  
As quick as thought at my hand flew,  
Frae Aberbrothock a' the way,  
In the short space of half a day,  
Wi' a paper tied around his neck,  
Sayin', " My father was lyin' sick,  
And biddin' me for gudesake flee  
And close at last his aged e'e."  
I wrote a note and sent it back  
By the beast, that I would tak' the smack,

That sailed exact neist night at twal ;  
 And aff the carrier doo set sail,  
 And landit safe at his bedside,  
 After sax hours seven minutes ride ;  
 And wi' the news and the baist's flight  
 The auld man's broken heart grew light,  
 And ben he brought ilka friend and neepor,  
 And filled them fou as ony piper,  
 An' grew sae weel, that on my landin',  
 I saw him on the jetty standin',  
 As round's a neep wi' creesh and fat,  
 And fu' o' stuff's a porter vat.  
 After this quick and sudden news,  
 We postit till the Cornal's house ;  
 Whaur we discovered frae twa cards,  
 That his brave regiment, the Guards,  
 Ware neist day, faith, to be review'd  
 By the King himsel', wi' honors proud ;  
 And that the Cornal and his Cossacks,  
 The Dukes o' Cumberland and Sussex,  
 Ware after that, in splendour fine,  
 Wi's Majesty himsel' to dine ;  
 An' ony frien' they chuse to bring  
 Wad be sae welcome, said the King—  
 A hint the Cornal quickly took,  
 An' my rough hand wi' friendship shook,  
 And said, wi' a maist gentle squeeze,  
 " The Lord-sake, Deacon, ye'll gae wi's,  
 And tak' your dinner wi' us a',  
 And kiss King George's sacred pa'."

A proposition whilk ye need  
 Na fear but that I at once agreed.  
 The grand day comes, and frae my bed  
 I flaw like shot, and quickly clad  
 Mysel' into the best o' gear,  
 'Fore royalty noo till appear.  
 The best o' blacks and satin breeks,

My powdered head as white as leeks,  
And buckles on ilk knee and fit,  
A cane besides, gowd, every bit,  
And every thing besides in style,  
And aff I gaed, wi' rank and file ;  
And, just as auld Saint Paul's struck one,  
The grand review o' horse began ;  
Sic horse ; they came some frae Brabant,  
Arabia, and frae Alicant,  
An' bigger than the elephant,  
The mighty men that on them redd  
Ware aught feet high besides the head,  
A' dress'd in blue and gold and steel,  
And spurs o' gowd upon ilk heel.  
There carabines and swords sae sheen  
Dazzled complete my wond'rin' e'en.  
The Cornal sat upo' the right ;  
A perfect blaze o' gowd and light.  
The King, a decent guid auld man,  
Wi' his sons, the Dukes, on every han',  
Keek'd at them, wi' a large e'e-glass,  
Bowing to a' that did him pass.  
They wheeled, they galloped, fought, and fired,  
As weel as tho' they had been hired ;  
And shew'd aff a' their evolutions,  
Better nor Blucher and his Prussians,  
And quite astonished King and Dukes,  
Wi' their manœuvres, hooks, and crooks ;  
And ware about to finish fan  
The Cornal wav'd to me his han',  
An' up I gaed, and made my boo  
To King and Dukes and Cornal too,  
Wha spak', amid the cannons whizzit',  
To's Majesty, "This is my cousin,  
I beg till introduce him to you,  
An' beg ye'll tak' him up there wi' you,  
And houp ye'll like him ; for I ken,

Ye'll never meet his like again."  
The King rax'd owre his nieve and grippit  
My hands as firm's Saunt Johnston's tippit,  
And said, at ance, "The wae betide me,  
If the honest man shan't sit aside me;  
Come up here, Deacon—here's a place—  
God bless me! ye've a bonny face!"  
Weel, up I gaed, an' cheek by jowl  
Sat wi' his Majesty, upon my soul!  
And by his order, and his sons',  
I then inspectit a' the guns,  
Equipments, ammunition, sabres,  
And a' the different cuts and capers  
O' guid twa thousand men and horses,  
The chief o' a' the British Forces.  
The Cornal was sae pleased at seein'—  
Without a single word o' leein'—  
Me wi' his Majesty, he garr'd  
A mighty sturdy red-hair'd guard  
Gae thro' an evolution that  
Nae Scotsman but mysel' e'er saw't.  
He first divided a' his corps  
Asunder, guid twal yards and more,  
Wi' their horses' heads turn'd a' ae way,  
And to the sturdy guard did say,  
"Come, loup you loon, an' be preceise,  
And let them see our exercise;  
Dinna stop, or halt, but aff and jump  
O'er man and man, the corps by lump  
An', if ye touch a single feather,  
I'll score your back till't lose the leather.  
Come, aff and loup, and lat the King  
An' my cusin here see how ye spring."  
Awa the scoundrel redd and flaw,  
Owre ane and ane, horse, man, and a',  
And didna' touch a single croup, or  
Hair or hide o' a single trooper,

But lightit safe at's journey's close,  
His cheeks as red as ony rose,  
'Mid the applauses o' the ring,  
And great contentment o' the King,  
Wha, for his suppleness and trouble,  
Ord'ed him an allowance double,  
And gae him a half-guinea till  
Treat himsel' wi' a private gill.

Noo, aff we set wi' George to dine,  
An' stuff oursel's wi' beef and wine,  
And gar our harns turn on a pivot  
Wi' a pint or twa o' guid Glenlivet ;  
And shune arrived at the Horse Guards,  
Whar, after burstin' weel their beards,  
The Officers and Cornal cam'  
To the banquet-room to tak' a dram ;  
And, having King and Dukes baith toastit,  
We then sat daun to boiled and roastit.  
Soups o' a' kinds made out o' paddocks,  
An' a' kin kind o' fish and haddocks ;  
Beef, lamb, and veal, and pork, and chuckies ;  
And drank oursel's as fou as buckies.  
There never was sic fun, I'm thinkin',  
I' the place before, or sic like drinking.  
The deil ane o's could stand our lane,  
Far less essay for to gang hame.  
A' were obliged to be hame carried,  
An' I was to the Arbroath smack ferried,  
Where I arrived frae my grand tour  
I' the space o' aught-and-forty hour,  
Ha'in' seen a' sights that ever man  
Has witnessed by sea or lan'.  
But I forgot to tell you that,  
After I was as fou's a bat,  
The king, guid, honest soul, owre's wine,  
Invested me to come and dine

Wi'm, ony day I chuse to say,  
 If 'twasna on the washin' day ;—  
 A day that neither wife nor rangers  
 Could be prepared to welcome strangers ;  
 But, should I come on ony ither,  
 He wad receive me as a brither.  
 I shook the auld man by the han',  
 An' said, " If I *dinna*, *catch* me than ! "

But hear a maist unearthly roar  
 Broke in at window, roof, and door,  
 Just as the Deacon had begun  
 His narrative o' wit and fun,  
 To finish like a story-teller,  
 Makin' ilk word a downright nailer ;—  
 And in Jean cam', as swift's a deer,  
 White as a corpse upon its bier,  
 And gae a screech that cluds and starns  
 Re-echo'd back as far's Newbarns.  
 " It's comin'—O ! it's comin' ;—see !  
 An' sic a neb and sic an' e'e !  
 It's cluttie come as sure as death ;  
 Or, gude preserve's ! my first man's wraith ;"  
 And down she lightit, 'mid a shower  
 O' liquid fire, upon the floor.  
 James lookit round, as white as paper,  
 And ilk ane lookit till his niepor,  
 And in it cam'—the pelican.  
 Red frae his e'en the metal ran ;  
 He brought the fear o' death on a',  
 As he leaned himsel' again the wa',  
 And thus addressed in accents rough,  
 Our friend the Deacon :—" Drink your stuff ;  
 Your tales this day, your travels, and  
 Your matchles deeds, by sea and land,  
 Are a' recorded i' the deeps  
 O' that same book that hornie keeps.

Your crack-brain'd head and lyin' tongue,  
That hae for saxty years last rung,  
That's beat to sticks the great Munchausen,  
And spun yards tough as Thessanhausen,  
Maun aff this earth noo disappear,  
To flourish in anither sphere.  
So, come—dispatch, and come wi' me.”  
The Deacon said, “Just wait a wee,  
Till but a few words here I say,  
To those that mony a happy day  
I hae spent wi', and then I'll gae  
Wherever you shall point the way.  
I've kent, this mony winter's lang,  
Wi' you, at last, I boot to gang.  
I brawly kent my doom was sealed ;  
For, 'twas langsyne to me revealed,  
That I should not, like mortals here  
(Here the puir Deacon drapt a tear),  
Die like an ass, but lungs inflated,  
But should flee aff and be translated.  
My friends and cronies, I am gane  
To that same place whare you nor nane,  
Not my ain sell, can tell the place—  
(The Deacon shook his head wi' grace).  
Ah ! in anither star to dee !  
Leavin' behind this earth and sea.  
Oh ! to that coast whare he shall guide us,  
Be't to the Moon, or Georgium Sidus !  
May I look down upo' my famous  
Deeds here on earth, and auld Saint Thamas !  
Look down upo' the structure Gothic  
O' the Abbey o' auld Aberbrothock,  
And see her bairns, wi' tearfu' e'e,  
Lookin' i' the lift to search for me.”  
“Your pray'r is granted,” said the beast,  
He shook his wings and rear'd his crest.  
“Thy memory when in air shall rot,

Thy trunk shall never be forgot,  
But, like a bright and shinin' beacon,  
To immortality shall light the Deacon,  
Leaving behind to generations,  
To Scotland and her little nations,  
A wake of glory pure and thin,  
For a' her bairns to follow in.  
But, come—we're waited for—dispatch—  
The hour is past upo' your watch ;  
And langer here a night or day  
Upo' the earth I darena stay ;  
So, up and mount—my back's your saddle,  
My neck and nibe your crib and bridle."  
Wi' that the pelican doun kneel'd,  
And on his back the Deacon speel'd.  
Awa they flaw as quick as light ;  
His cronies o' them got a sicht ;  
The beast three times in air did wheel  
Around the Ha'en ;—James, neck and heel,  
Haudin' the beast as firm's a gird,  
As higher raise the awfu' bird ;  
Till frae the æther dark and blue,  
They heard a lang and faint—adieu !  
And James and bird 'mid cluds and sky,  
Vanish'd at last frae mortal eye.

THE END.



